POLICE · BUDGET · EDITION

EDITED · BY HAROLD FURNISS

FAMOUS CRIMES

PAST AND PRESENT

ONE · PENNY

CHARLES PEACE MURDERS MR. DYSON.

Vol. I.—No. 1.

"Hatred destroyeth as the upas tree; anger smiteth as a staff;
Hatred is the atmosphere of hell; but anger's known in heaven."

—MARTIN TUPPER ("Proverbial Philosophy.")

CHAPTER I.

What led up to the Banner-Cross Murder—The Persecution of Mrs. Dyson—The Flight and the Pursuit of Peace.

DOWN the vista of crime which stretches from the first transgression of our Father Adam to the last little boy punished for stealing a pennyworth of sweets there stand at intervals landmarks—milestones, as it were—on the road of iniquity. These are the doings of great criminals, of men whose cunning, wickedness, or brutality have thrown out their lives into relief against the sordid background of everyday transgressors. It is of these that we propose to write, and we do so with a twofold purpose; firstly, that those who are interested in criminology and desirous of furthering the science by which the moral welfare of the country is preserved may have before them a reliable record of typical criminals; and secondly, that as the natural bent of man trends towards crime, we may provide him with reading matter, interesting and dramatic, which will afford him food for thought.

Foremost among the great offenders stands Charles Peace—burglar, blackmailer, mimic, assassin—and with his history we will open our series.

It is not our purpose to detail his life as a mere record of events, dates, and places, but we hope to lay before our readers a lurid yet true account of the greatest rascal that has ever disgraced England.

In the early part of 1876 there was residing at Darnall—then a village three miles from Sheffield, but now, owing to the rapid growth of the cutlery centre, one of its suburbs—a Mr. Dyson and his wife. They had been married at Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A., some ten years previously, and Dyson, who was a clever civil engineer, had come to England in search of work. His speciality was railway construction, and owing to the excellence of his testimonials he had little difficulty in obtaining a situation on the North-Eastern Railway.

In person he was a striking figure, over six feet in height, straight as a lath, with black hair and eyebrows, and piercing eyes which twinkled like beads in his face. Indeed, his height was a standing joke among his fellows, and it was found necessary in the office in which he worked to procure a special table for him to draw at, since he was unable to make use of that provided for the general draughtsmen. He was haughty, reserved, and shy, and was generally considered by his fellow-employees to have descended from a higher station in life. He was a gentleman, a man of honour and of culture, and he obviously found it difficult to forget the fact, though at times it escaped his memory that the true gentleman is courteous to all. Those who knew him best say that he was sensitive to a degree, and that in company with congenial souls was one of the most charming men that could be met, but that in the presence of his intellectual inferiors his charm was lost—dried up, as it were.

This was the man, then, who was mated to Mrs. Dyson, plebeian to her very soul, coarse, unintellectual, the very one whom naturally he would most scorn, for the hawk does not mate with the dove, nor the eagle with the owl. She came from the lower ranks of the people, and it was always a matter of wonder to his colleagues why he married her. She had neither charm, wit, nor beauty; her figure was awkward, her conversation witless. Still, one can never account for the vagaries of love. After he came to Darnall—some little distance from his headquarters—he absented himself from his office for a fortnight. Domestic discord was said to be the cause, but no one ever knew what that trouble was. That it had connection with Mrs. Dyson there can be little reasonable doubt. For this breach of duty he was summarily dismissed from his situation; however, he soon obtained fresh employment.

The house at Darnall was unobtrusive, and when it is mentioned that two doors off was a picture-framer's shop its character can easily be imagined. The occupant of that shop was the subject of this biography.

Imagine a man about 5 ft. 4 in. in height, clean-shaven, with scanty hair, wearing brass-rimmed spectacles, with a projecting lower jaw and a peculiar, malignant expression; such was Charles Peace—a small man, mean, miserable, almost deformed, but the master-mind of the first detective experts of his day. His personal courage was enormous, his agility surprising, and his consummate impudence colossal. Think of a hunted criminal sitting in open court undetected, beside the very officers appointed to arrest him. Recall the years that he, whose personality was supposed to be known to every police official, lived unknown as a peaceable householder, committing his depredations by night and posing as a dilettante by day, while warrants were out for his arrest for wilful murder! This is the man with whom we have to deal.

Whether Peace knew Mrs. Dyson prior to the Darnall meeting or not is a moot point, but she declared that he did

not, and that she had never set eyes on him until he started business as a picture-framer within two doors of her husband's residence. Further, she stated that Peace forced his attentions upon her, compelled her to know him. Does this seem probable when the positions of the parties are considered?

Anyhow, Peace set about introducing himself into the Dyson ménage. He was a lover of animals, and among his pets numbered a couple of parrots, which he used to put on the partition wall of the back garden for the delectation of Mrs. Dyson.

"Charley! Charley!" the parrots would cry, and then perform various antics.

Mr. Dyson did not object to this at first, and was civil to the picture-frame maker when he met him in the street. But Peace aimed at a closer intimacy: he wished to be one of the family. Accordingly, he commenced calling upon the Dysons, and although the engineer's refined feelings warned him against the vulgar little man, his desire to interest and amuse his wife prevented him from bringing about an open rupture with Peace. During the many days that Dyson was away from home Peace cemented his acquaintance with the engineer's wife, until at last he obtained a partial mastery over her. Then it was that he first proposed that she should leave the husband who had raised her in the social scale, should abandon the paths of decency and rectitude, and elope with him to Manchester. He said that he had plenty of money, and that he would like a tobacconist's shop for her if she would but consent to quit her husband. She would never know what it was to be short of cash again, as he could always make as much as he wanted. He offered to buy her silk dresses and to provide her with a complete outfit, so that she need have no scruple about taking anything which her real husband had provided her with.

But Mrs. Dyson was honest, if not intellectual, and she refused to listen to the tempter. With the cunning of all great criminals, Peace realised at once that he had acted prematurely, and therefore set to work to cultivate Dyson's acquaintance more than he had previously done.

Morning, noon, and night, at all hours of the day, he used to run into the Dysons' house, and his unwelcome figure would appear round the door even when they were sitting down to table.

Mr. Dyson's natural politeness compelled him to invite the unwelcome guest to join them at meals. This was exactly what Peace wanted, and he used to lay himself out to further fascinate Mrs. Dyson. There are many historical records of women who have been attracted by an ugly man; ladies have been known to caress monkeys, to fall into raptures over a Japanese pug, or to descant on the beauties of a hideous bulldog. Of this mould was Mrs. Dyson, and so it came about that she took kindly to the stunted abnormality who paid his addresses to her. Gradually the position of affairs dawned on Mr. Dyson, and he acquired a loathing for the little person who was raising a barrier between himself and his wife. But Peace had an obstinate disposition, and having set himself the task of dominating Mrs. Dyson, determined to have no rest until he achieved it.

Was Dyson lunching? Peace was there. Was Dyson taking tea? Peace appeared. Did Dyson return to Darnall? Peace was in the drawing-room.

The little man's persistence at length became such an intolerable nuisance that Dyson began to throw out hints that Peace's company was not required. Did the rascal pay any attention? Not if his visits were more frequent than before. Consequently Dyson had recourse to another expedient. Taking one of his professional cards he wrote on the back: "Charles Peace is requested not to interfere with Mr. Dyson's family." This he threw into Peace's back garden. But little the villain recked of a notice of this nature. His attentions became more insistent, his impudence more unbearable. Mrs. Dyson implored him to leave her alone, protesting that he would ruin the happiness of her home. Her pleas were disregarded. If she went shopping, Peace followed; if she went for a walk, her persecutor met her at the first corner; if she pulled up the blind, the hated features stared through the lower pane.

Yet he was not wholly distasteful to her, and the struggle between duty and fascination wore her down. Vanity was Mrs. Dyson's besetting sin, and the attentions of a man, even though he resembled a monkey, gratified her.

One afternoon Peace called—for Dyson was away—and asked the lady to walk with him as far as his brother's public-house. Greatly against her will, she did so, and there stood watching some dancing for a short time. Noticing that Peace was engaged with one of his friends, she turned and ran out of the inn, trusting that her absence would not be noticed.

Scarcely had she gone ten yards when a well-known voice remarked: "It's not the least use your thinking of cutting me. Where you go I go, and until I die I stick to you." She hurried along the road towards Darnall, but Peace dogged her footsteps, at times running before her, and making horrible grimaces as he passed. When she came in sight of a well-known roadside tavern she quick-

If she went shopping, Peace followed.

ened her paces, hoping to gain protection there; but her tormentor followed and entered the place with her.

Attached to the hostelry was a garden with an arbour at the far corner, and thither Peace led the unresisting woman. "I am devoted to you, as you know, and nothing in this world shall separate us!" he whispered. Mrs. Dyson caught him by the arm, exclaiming: "You are a fool, Mr. Peace!" and with this remark pushed him away from her.

"I mean what I say, my dear, and I will not be thwarted in any way," said Peace, adding, "I love you too well to be thrown over. Do you understand me?"

"No, I do not. I have a good husband, and must not listen to your rubbish," Mrs. Dyson replied.

"I do not care for the hulking fellow you call your husband, or for anyone else."

"Be careful what you say!" remarked Mrs. Dyson.

"Be careful! Why should I be so? I shall not give you up under any conditions whatever, so that finishes the matter. I have money, and all will be yours if you will come to Manchester with me at once."

Mrs. Dyson burst out laughing, and Peace felt the sting acutely.

"You laugh, do you?" said Peace, in a fury. "I will make you come with me." Wherewith he displayed his teeth with a horrible grimace. He caught her by the arm, and pinched her so cruelly that she winced with pain.

"How dare you?" she asked; "why should I be treated thus?"

"I don't intend leaving you in a hurry, and if you want to know, I will be near you as long as I live. Now do you understand?"

"You torment me too much."

"Possibly; but you shall do what I tell you, despite your resolutions."

Mrs. Dyson felt the man's influence, and eventually screamed slightly. Mr. Dyson at that moment happened to be passing the hostelry, and at once went to the rescue.

"How dare you," asked Dyson, "persist in annoying

"He is bad company, my dear, and I think he is our evil genius."

"He is a venomous reptile!" rejoined Mrs. Dyson.

The couple then returned home, the husband being greatly exasperated at Peace's behaviour, and protesting that, unless Mrs. Dyson had offered him some encouragement, he would never have dared to take such liberties with her.

"I have done nothing of the kind!" said Mrs. Dyson; "I detest the little beast quite as much as you do!"

"I don't believe it. No man would follow you about unless you led him on."

High words ensued between the two, and Dyson went off to his work in a rage. The evening closed in, and Mrs. Dyson began to make preparations for going to bed.

Suddenly something rattled against the window-panes; the lady thought nothing of it, but in a minute or two a handful of gravel was dashed against the glass, with such

PLACED HIS HEAD LOW DOWN AND RAN AT HIS ASSAILANT.

my wife? If you do not discontinue your unseemly conduct I shall take means to stop it."

"Shut up!" said Peace. "This is a public-house, and I shall please myself as to my doings."

"You are an impudent scoundrel!" said Mr. Dyson, seizing Peace by the collar, and dragging him out of the place. In a moment the rascal had slipped free from Dyson, and, with one of his dexterous twists, placed his head low down, and ran at his assailant, butting him in the stomach. Peace was a particularly powerful man, and the movement was so sudden that Dyson was in a way nonplussed, and he eventually found himself on his back, and Peace had fled!

One of the waiters came to assist, and a general disgust was felt for the man who had treated his fellow thus. The rogue was gone, and no trace was to be found of him. Possibly it would have terminated differently had he been caught.

Dyson was extremely angry, and told his wife that he would procure a summons and punish Peace as he deserved. Sterling good fellow that he was, he remarked to her:

force there could be no mistake that it was a signal. Cautiously she opened the lattice and gazed into the gloom, when out of the darkness came a pebble with a piece of paper wrapped round it, and in the dim light she could just discern Peace standing at the corner of the house.

"What do you want now?" she exclaimed. "Why do you pester me like this?"

"I want you," was the retort, and, in spite of your pride, I mean to have you."

"Go away!" said Mrs. Dyson; "go away at once! I will have nothing to do with you!"

"Don't be so sure of that. Read that note!" hissed Peace.

Absolutely dominated by her tormentor, Mrs. Dyson unrolled the paper from the stone and found scrawled on it: "Don't flatter yourself that you can elude me. I am here again, as you see. Come down, or it will be worse for you."

Turning to the window, the frightened woman called out: "Go away! Go away!"

"Come down!" shouted Peace

"I shan't!" replied Mrs. Dyson.

"Won't you?"

"No!"

"Then I shall break into the house and force you to come down."

So saying, Peace produced a revolver and pointed it at Mrs. Dyson, adding, "If you don't open the door something terrible will happen. You know the sort of man you have got to deal with."

"I'll call my husband!" replied Mrs. Dyson.

"Your husband, you fool!" jeered Peace. "I know he is far away. Come down at once and let me in."

Such a mastery had Peace obtained over the wretched woman that she came down and opened the door, and again begged him to go away. He only laughed at her, and, stepping into the little passage, placed his arm round her neck and attempted to kiss her.

Mrs. Dyson was a powerful woman, and struggled violently to release herself from his grasp; but the little viper stuck to her, declaring that he would have his way. She struck him several times with her fists, but he would not release her.

However, assistance was at hand. A policeman passing saw the pair wrestling in the doorway, and Mrs. Dyson called to him to help her.

"Will you charge this man?" asked the constable.

"No," replied the injured lady; "only take him out of the house."

"Right!" said the officer, and with a dexterous shove he forced Peace through the door.

"Keep your hands to yourself!" cried Peace. "I know the law as well as you do, and will lodge a complaint against you if you touch me again." However, apparently he thought it best to retreat, for he did not love the uniform of the law, and off he went down the road, making as he departed mocking gestures and kissing his hand to Mrs. Dyson. The constable kept his eye on the premises that night, but Peace did not return.

A day or two later Dyson was out walking with his wife, and they met Peace. The engineer, maddened at the treatment he had received, and at the worry his wife was exposed to, told Peace never to come near him again.

"I'll do what I like!" said Peace.

For the next two or three days he increased his impudent attentions, and prowled round the little house at Darnall at all hours of the day and night, suddenly pouncing out on Mrs. Dyson if she showed herself outside the door, making grimaces, threatening her, and exclaiming: "Now will you come to Manchester? I will make you so that no one will look at you again, and then I will have you to myself."

Such persecution became at last unbearable, and the Dysons were at their wits' end. But an opportunity was soon to be found. Dyson and his wife were talking to a friend in the street, when Peace suddenly appeared, and, walking right up to them, said:

"I know you were talking of me. What have you been saying?"

Mrs. Dyson admitted that she had been discussing his disgraceful conduct. In the twinkling of an eye Peace's face changed, he whipped out his revolver, and shrieked: "I will blow out your brains, you false beast, and those of your husband also!" and he forced the muzzle of the pistol into Mrs. Dyson's face.

Matters had now become so serious that Mrs. Dyson, under the advice of her husband, took out a summons against the little wretch, and he was ordered to appear at the next Petty Sessions. But Peace had already had some experience of magistrates and their methods, and preferred to absent himself, with the natural result that a warrant was issued for his arrest.

From the day the summons was granted the picture shop was deserted, save for two women, one of whom was Peace's wife, or was reputed to be so. Peace had absolutely vanished. But the Dysons knew the malignity of the man with whom they had to deal, and felt sure that, sooner or later, he would wreak vengeance upon them. Daily they expected to see his leering face over the wall or in the garden, or looking round the corner, making grimaces, and they became apprehensive, and determined to quit the district where they had suffered.

"Can't we leave here, Arthur?" said Mrs. Dyson; "for as long as Peace knows where we are we shall never feel easy in our minds."

"It's awkward, Kate," replied her husband; "but perhaps it will be the best thing we could do. However, say nothing to anyone till I have had a look round."

Business compelled Mr. Dyson to live within easy reach of Sheffield, so he thought that he would select a spot as far as possible removed from Darnall. Accordingly, he went house-hunting round about Banner-Cross, six miles away, and on the opposite side of the town. He took some little time to find a suitable abode, but one day he came back and said to his wife: "Kate, I think I have spotted the place at last."

Attempted to kiss her.

"Where is it, Arthur?" she rejoined.

"At Banner-Cross, just off the Eccleshall New Road. The house is not much to look at, and it is the last place in which that Peace would dream of searching for us. Now, don't say a word to a soul, lest that spiteful little brute hears of our move."

"How on earth will you manage about the furniture? Everybody will know where we are going."

"Oh, that is easy enough! I will engage a strange firm to shift our belongings."

Days passed rapidly, and Mrs. Dyson kept her own counsel, telling no one that they contemplated leaving Darnall. She felt certain that nobody even guessed the projected flight, and least of all Charles Peace, for a rumour had reached her that he was in Manchester, and that the detectives who held the warrant for his arrest were searching for him in that city.

At daybreak on October 26, 1876, two furniture vans drew up in front of the Darnall house. All the previous night Dyson and his wife had been making preparations, and little time was lost in transferring their goods to the vehicles. No one approached the men, who were unknown,

no one even noticed their presence at that early hour, and the vans started for their destination.

Shortly afterwards Dyson and his wife left their house as if to go for a walk, handed the key and the quarter's rent to the owner, and journeyed into Sheffield, where they had lunch, so as to allow time for the goods to reach Banner-Cross.

After their refreshment they started for their new home, and on their arrival found the men taking the last articles into the house.

"See, Kate," said Dyson, "this is our little place; we shall be comfortable and safe enough here, I hope."

But Mrs. Dyson glanced at the building, threw up her hands, and screamed:

"Look, Arthur, look!"

He did. At the door, through which the furniture removers were carrying the last articles, stood a figure only too well remembered. With a shuffling gait and a diabolical grin, Charles Peace advanced to meet them.

"Aha! my beauties!" he said. "You thought to escape me, but you have failed. I am here to annoy you, and annoy you I will, wherever you go!"

Mrs. Dyson turned pale. A crowd of conflicting thoughts rushed through her brain. How did Charles Peace discover her retreat? Would her husband believe she had not told him? Was her married life to be ruined by the dastardly little scoundrel? But in a moment she regained her self-possession, and said to Peace: "There is a warrant out against you; you will be arrested if you do not fly."

"That's what I care for the police!" said Peace, snapping his fingers. "Warrant or no warrant, I go where I please. I will not be shaken off, and will follow you if it is to the end of the world." Thus saying, he walked rapidly past them and disappeared.

Imagine the consternation of the Dysons, hounded down, tracked from place to place by the very man they sought to avoid. A second move was out of the question, for their tormentor would surely follow them, and, moreover, money was not too plentiful. Still, they comforted themselves with the hope that Peace was a braggart, and really feared arrest. Thus they settled down at Banner-Cross, determined to make the best of the matter.

The house was not a large one. It stood a little way back from the road, with a small forecourt, from which two steps led to the highway. At the side of the house was a passage leading to a backyard, and half-way down this was a small closet, detached from the house, as is not uncommon in the North of England. Between the closet and the yard one had to pass a window belonging to the neighbouring residence, which was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Gregory, who kept a small general shop. The back premises of the houses were connected. From this short description our readers will be able to picture the Banner-Cross establishment.

"AHA! MY BEAUTIES! YOU THOUGHT TO ESCAPE ME!"

A month passed by, and Peace did not make his appearance. As a matter of fact, he was interested elsewhere—in the trial of two brothers, named Habron, who were charged with having murdered a policeman named Cock, at Whalley Grange, near Manchester. Peace loved criminal trials, and even though a warrant was out for his arrest he sat calmly in court, and listened to Mr. Justice Lopes sentencing William Habron to be hanged.

But he could not keep away from Banner-Cross, and on November 29 he returned there, just to have a look at what the Dysons were doing. He reached Banner-Cross in the middle of the afternoon, and took a stroll round the district, spotting what houses would be likely to repay him for the trouble of a professional visit later on. As night was drawing in he went to the vicarage and rang the bell. When the servant appeared, he said that his name was Peace, and that he wished to see the vicar immediately on very important business.

The good vicar recognised the name, for Peace had once before called on him, and directed that he should be shown into the study, where he joined him. Charley then

stated that on the occasion of a previous visit he had said that the Dysons were not moral people—a statement which the clergyman had refused to believe—now he had brought proofs of their iniquity. He declared that he had not always been as good as he should be, but that all was due to the evil influence of Mr. Dyson, and he wished to make a clean breast of the whole matter before he showed the parson the documentary evidence in support of his assertions.

Mr. Newman was one of those good priests who will never risk quenching the smouldering flax, and let Peace have his say; but the allegations which the rascal made were so horribly obscene that even the experienced parson shuddered.

It was only, the criminal avowed, when Dyson became jealous of him that he had made up his mind to tell the truth, and he believed that the spiritual head of the parish was the proper person to be informed, so that he might help in their salvation!

"See to your wife, Mr. Dyson."

Peace was a champion hypocrite.

The clergyman listened to him, and promised that he would preserve his story as a secret. "That is not necessary," quickly rejoined Peace. "It need not be secret. In the interests of the parish it should not be so." Then, as he went down the steps, he added, "I won't call at the Dysons' to-night, but I will have a look in at the Gregorys'."

After leaving the vicarage, Peace went off to the Banner-Cross Hotel, where he refreshed himself after his late spiritual exertions with a little spirituous liquor. Before he reached there, however, he met a Mrs. Colgraves, to whom he remarked that there were some very unpleasant people living in the house next the Gregorys. Mrs. Colgraves answered that it did not matter in the least to her. "But she (Mrs. Dyson) is my 'mistress,'" replied Peace, only he used a much coarser word, which would be offensive in these columns.

As he was leaving the public-house, he ran up against a man named Brassington, who was standing opposite the tavern, and spoke to him about the Dysons, adding, "I will make it warm for them. I'll shoot them, as sure as fate." Then he made off down the road in the direction of Mr. Dyson's house.

Once in sight of the premises, he disappeared, for he did not particularly wish to be seen by anyone. He crept down the narrow passage to the back-yard of his victim's house, and then sat on a wall, waiting the proper moment to act. No feeling of remorse filled his breast; he had come for a definite purpose, and he meant to fulfil it. Knowing our man, we shall not be surprised to hear that he was perfectly acquainted with the position of the various rooms in the Dysons' house.

In an upper room there was a light, and as the blinds were not drawn down he could see Mrs. Dyson moving about, apparently tidying up. When she had done this the lamp was extinguished and the curtains drawn. He snapped his fingers and whistled softly, a signal he had frequently made when at Darnall. Whether Mrs. Dyson had heard him or not is a matter for conjecture, but, at any rate, she appeared at the back door a few minutes later, holding a light. She slipped on her clogs and started off towards the closet. Mrs. Gregory heard the patter of her footsteps as she came past her window.

Suddenly a heart-rending shriek was heard, coming undoubtedly from the little outhouse. The kindly neighbour recognised the voice, and ran round to the back-yard to summon Mr. Dyson. But the watchful husband had also heard the cry, and met Mrs. Gregory as he ran towards the passage. "See to your wife, Mr. Dyson!" she called, and then, being alarmed, she retired to her own house, and bolted the door.

What had happened?

When Mrs. Dyson opened the door to leave the closet the sudden change from light to darkness bewildered her for a moment. Then through the gloom she recognised a face, grinning fiendishly—the face of Charles Peace!

Making a rapid gesture he grabbed at her, and brandished a revolver, while he hissed, "Come with me!" With a loud cry Mrs. Dyson withdrew into the closet and fastened the door. A few seconds later she heard her husband's footsteps coming from the back-yard up the passage, and, feeling that she had now a protector, she opened the door and advanced to meet him. She had scarcely taken three steps when he passed her, remarking, "Keep still, Kate!" For he had seen at the far end of the passage leading into the forecourt the figure of a retreating man, and it was a form he knew well. It was Peace.

With rapid strides he attempted to overtake him, possibly with the intention of punishing the intruder, but when he was within three paces of the villain the latter turned. There was a flash and a loud report. Peace had shot at Mr. Dyson. But he had shot wide, for the bullet flattened against the wall of the court.

"You ruffian! You have shot my husband!" shouted Mrs. Dyson, as she ran towards the retreating men. Peace continued to make for the gateway leading into the road, and Dyson followed him.

The engineer was not more than a yard from Peace when the latter descended the two steps from the forecourt. Again the pistol rang out, but this time with deadly effect. Mr. Dyson gave a groan, a short hiccough, and fell to the ground. Over the fence at the opposite side of the road Peace scrambled, believing himself to be unobserved, but in the roadway stood a man, named Wilson, who had seen him.

On hearing the second shot Mrs. Dyson rushed to her husband, who was lying huddled up on the path, with a gaping wound in his temple, from which the life-blood was slowly welling. Tenderly he was carried indoors, and medical aid was sent for, but all help was of no avail. Poor Dyson never spoke again, and within an hour was dead—slain while performing the noblest duty of man, protecting his wife.

TO BE CONTINUED

IN THE TIMES OF TORTURE

CHAPTER I.

"This, this is misery! the last, the worst
That man can feel."
—Pope's translation of Homer's Iliad, Book XXII.

IN the bustle and worry of a sternly-practical age, in this era of steam and electricity, endless grind and breathless competition, one often sighs for the "good old times," for the picturesque days of doublet and hose, when the world moved slowly, and when everyone lived in an atmosphere of romance. Times associated with Yule logs and Maypoles, tournaments, and feastings, and the glorious wars which we read of in our history-books. And in our reading we get glimpses of ye gallant knight and his gentle ladye, and of a happy people free from care. Life was then all bravery and sunshine, if you rely on the pictures and romances in order to form your opinion. Thus—distance lends enchantment.

To those who lived, and, perchance, sinned, in those far-distant days life was anything but bravery and sunshine. The lord of the manor and the gallant knight were not always the courageous, bluff, jovial men we are sometimes led to believe they were; the fair ladies were not always gentle; whilst the fire of punishment, the rack, and the thumbscrew, the gibbet, and the guillotine—known in England as the "Halifax gibbet," and in Scotland as the "Scottish maiden"—more often than not loomed larger in the public eye than either Yule log or Maypole.

There was little mercy about the law in those days, and the way of the transgressor was distinctly hard. The unfortunate wretch who had broken the law, or the still more unlucky being who was alleged to have committed some offence, but was quite innocent, had terrors to face and the most horrible tortures to endure, of which we, living in an age of mercy, can have no adequate conception.

In civilised countries nowadays the law endeavours to administer even-handed justice to the offender.

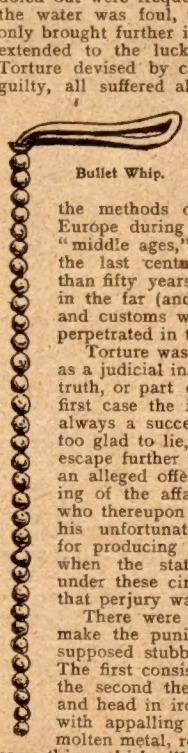
The prosecution is given no advantage over the prisoner, whose liberty is hedged about with endless safeguards. Under the English penal code, an accused person is deemed innocent until proved guilty. In the old days the contrary was the case. The most brutal or callous murderer or the ruffian steeped to the lips in treason now need only fear a studiously painless death. In the "good old times" his death would have been painful to a degree, "something with boiling oil in it," as our old friend, the Mikado, remarks, or perhaps molten metal and red-hot irons.

For the last century or more the law in Britain has been content to exact retribution without having recourse to torture. Our prison system may not be perfect, but it is as merciful as it is ever likely to be unless our gaols are to become, like some of our workhouses, luxurious palaces. Scanty fare, which fails to satisfy a strong man's hunger, is the only thing which convicts complain of; but, if the food is not plentiful, it is always wholesome. Occasionally a too energetic hooligan or a violent footpad suffers a flogging with the "cat-o'-nine-tails," but the lashes, a dozen or eighteen, are administered under strict medical supervision, whilst the "cat" is relatively a merciful instrument.

The place of the dreaded "press" room where prisoners who were "mute of malice" were tortured until they spoke has been taken by the witness-box, and the accused party is allowed to decide whether he will give evidence or not. In the press-room the alleged malefactor was placed on the floor and heavy weights were piled on top of him until, in his dreadful agony, he gave the information required of him. The criminal's only rack now is the rack of conscience, but it is doubtful whether many of the folk who are compulsory guests of his Majesty's ever feel the pangs of remorse.

And when the culprit goes to prison, what does he find? A gaol fitted with the latest sanitary improvements, hot baths, beautifully clean cells, attentive warders, a governor to listen to all his complaints, visiting justices to do ditto, and sound food—what there is of it.

What a contrast to the filthy, reeking dens into which convicts and alleged malefactors were herded in the "good old days of chivalry!" Food was scarce, and the small quantities doled out were frequently putrid, and rarely if ever fit to eat; the water was foul, the gaolers were brutal, and complaints only brought further ill-treatment. Then there were no mercies extended to the luckless mortal in the clutches of the law. Torture devised by cruel minds was their fate. Innocent or guilty, all suffered alike. Many a distracted cripple, victims of the law's "inquiry," craved charity at the church door in those times. They were hopelessly maimed—yet they had proved their innocence. The rack had done its deadly work.



Bullet Whip.

It is our purpose to describe some of the methods of punishment which were in vogue in Europe during the early years of Christianity in the "middle ages," and even up to the commencement of the last century. In no civilised country for more than fifty years has torture been legally recognised, but in the far (and near) East some of the horrible deeds and customs we shall recount are even now constantly perpetrated in the sacred name of "Justice!!!"

Torture was largely used in many European countries as a judicial instrument—an instrument for extracting the truth, or part of the punishment for the crime. In the first case the infliction of agonising cruelties was not always a success, for often the poor sufferer was only too glad to lie, and lie as heartily as he was able, to escape further pain. A man called as a witness against an alleged offender, if he protested that he knew nothing of the affair was handed over to the executioner, who thereupon sought to obtain evidence by using upon his unfortunate victim the most fiendish appliances for producing bodily pain. The anguish only ceased when the statement asked for was forthcoming, and under these circumstances it is not sufficient to believe that perjury was exceedingly rife.

There were varying grades of torture—no doubt to make the punishment fit the crime, or the degree of supposed stubbornness shown by the unwilling witness. The first consisted of inflicting pain without mutilation, the second the crushing of thumbs, hands, feet, legs, and head in iron apparatus, and the third of laceration, with appalling ingenious contrivances, and the use of molten metal, red-hot boots and gauntlets, and other fearsome things which will be fully described in future articles.

At first only certain classes of people could be subjected to this form of punishment. In ancient Athens, and during the Roman Republic, it was only practised upon slaves, but under the Roman Empire freemen and women also were liable to be

put to torture. But the helpless serfs suffered for their masters' crimes as well as for their own. A wife might be handed over to the executioner if accused of poisoning her husband, but before she felt any pain her unlucky vassals came in for their full share. This was also the case if a charge of adultery was preferred against a wife, the attention of the officers of the law being extended to include the husband's and the lady's father's dependents. It was believed that evidence could be obtained in this way; but it was not pleasant for the slaves.

Chain Whip.

There was, however, something of a saving clause in the Act which might have afforded the bondmen a little satisfaction. The owner of a servant tortured on a false statement could recover double his value from the accuser; but this would not benefit the crippled victim.

In charges of treason in ancient Rome, the person laying the information was liable, if he did not prove his case. The most severe Roman punishments included crucifixion, mutilation, exposure to wild beasts, and amputation of both hands, feet, or a limb. The last named was modified by Justinian, who decreed that only one hand should be cut off. Until the thirteenth century torture seems to have been unknown to canon law, but it was used in the dreaded Inquisition, and only prohibited by Papal Bull in 1816, though for many, many years before that period it had been tabooed. It was laid down that once a person had been subjected to the intense pain of the thumbscrews, or rack, or whatever instruments were used, the torture was not to be renewed, but the Inquisition got over the little difficulty by terming a repetition of the punishment a continuation.

In Germany the infliction of pain upon criminals, witnesses, and heretics was a fine art. Elaborate and hellishly-contrived apparatus existed in the dungeons of most of the feudal castles, whilst in the vaults beneath the town-halls of Nuremberg and Ratisbon were a tremendous and hideous array of instruments of the most atrocious description. Torture was abolished by the Prussian Diet in the middle of the eighteenth century. In Hanover it was still legal up to 1840. In France the practices were part of the judicial system until 1789; in Scotland it was resorted to after the Restoration, and was not abolished until 1708; in England it disappeared in 1646; whilst in Italy it was in vogue as late as 1860. Amongst the famous men who suffered was Galileo, the greatest scientist of many centuries.

Gaoler's Whip.

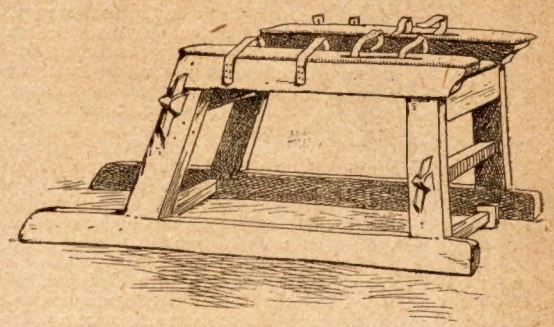
A word as to the illustrations. These have been specially prepared from the actual instruments used, and to those who can realise the hellish ingenuity of the men who invented the appliances, the fiendish cruelties practised by the law in the bygone times will appeal with added intensity.

Our pictures this week depict some of the instruments from the infamous castle at Nuremberg—the temple of torture. The executioners at Nuremberg were the high priests of their craft. Their awful ingenuity, their unspeakable callousness and abominable cruelties, terrorised the larger part of Western Europe, and accounts of their atrocious deeds were carried far and wide. Their instruments were imitated in other towns and countries, and if a tithe of the curses which had been showered upon Nuremberg had had effect the city would have ceased to exist many centuries ago. Our readers, as they follow these articles, will realise to the full the iniquitous nature of the tortures inflicted at the instigation of the law. As will be seen, the implements illustrated include three whips, an ancient cat, and a whipping-bed.

Ancient Cat.

They look terrible enough on paper, in all conscience, but, in reality, the instruments are infinitely inhuman. Take the whips. The first is made of bullets strung together, covered with leather, and attached to a strong wristlet, to enable the executioner to obtain a firm grip. The victim is tied up to a post or stretched out on the whipping-bed. "Swish!" and the Bullet Whip sings through the air. "Thud!" it coils round the naked body of the prisoner, and before his scream of agony ceases to echo in the torture-shed, the blood spirts out from a dozen wounds. And so on, until the poor sufferer's body is a mass of lacerated flesh and his life-blood drips in thick puddles on the ground. This whip was no doubt an imitation of the Roman plumbatae, or leaden balls, and slaves and prisoners of all kinds were scourged with it. The second of the whips illustrated is a fearful instrument. To a very strong handle of wood—elaborately carved to prevent it slipping through the hand, and thus allowing the whipper to put his full strength into each stroke—are attached several chains of flat, sharp-edged links. An expert using this could literally flay a man's back in a few strokes, and it may be taken as a fact that the man selected to inflict the lashes was the man with the strongest arm.

Sometimes there were two whippers—one using the right, and the other the left hand. The former, having laid on a few strokes, would yield his weapon to the latter, and thus no part of the victim's back or body would escape the searching links. The "cat" shown in the illustration is also a merciless weapon. Attached to the tails are strings of rough bullets, and it was woe-betide the criminal who was condemned to a close acquaintance with this instrument. There seems to have been no end to the varieties of whips in use in those days of torture. A heavy hempen scourge, with numerous lashes, each one having a steel barb woven into it so as to cut at each stroke; an iron whip, with six sharp-edged iron tails; another with five iron wire lashes, each one with rows of spur-shaped spikes to cut into the flesh; a hempen whip, with six lashes and barbed wire ends, another, with five lashes, completely studded with iron spikes; a prison warder's whip (for self-defence), consisting of a short, strong handle, and a twisted chain, with a weight at the end (also illustrated); and others with knotted and barbed lashes, are a few of the many varieties of "cats" in use in the olden times.



Whipping Bed.

How the whippers, it is recorded, delighted in curling the thongs of their weapons round the naked bodies of their bound and writhing victims! It mattered not to them that the sufferer's teeth met through his lips in an effort to repress an agonised shriek of pain; little they cared if the prison resounded with his screams. They only plied the whip the faster, and, in an ecstasy of savagery, dragged the entwining "tails" from the poor lacerated body in an effort to increase the dreadful torment of the prisoner.

What a contrast between the weapons we have described and the almost humane "cat" of the present day!

Five hundred lashes was a not infrequent punishment in the British Navy in the days of Nelson, and many a man who had fought gallantly for his country, and who could show wounds on the front of his body received in the heat of a battle with the enemy, carried to his grave a "criss-cross" pattern on his back, the sign-manual of the ship's corporal, who had obeyed the orders of a cruel captain.

The whipping-bed made the flogging all the more terrible in its consequences. That illustrated comes from Berlin. It is a large bench, strongly made, with straps to fasten the head, legs, feet, and arms of the victim. Bound in this fashion, face downwards, the executioner was able to inflict awful punishment upon his unhappy victim, who was so tightly held that it was quite impossible for him even to writhe. Attached to the bench is a movable platform, so that the whipper could stand well above his victims, and put all his strength into the lashes. Another form of the whipping-bench was more ingenious. It is a stretching gallows, known in Germany as "Schlimme Liesel" ("Fearful Eliza"). At the foot are strong iron rings, into which the man's feet were placed. His hands were then fastened to a triangular piece of wood, which was raised by pulleys until he was stretched beyond endurance. The flagellation would thus be horribly effective. It is said the prisoners were drawn out on this gallows and flayed. Flaying seems to have been more merciful than the whip.

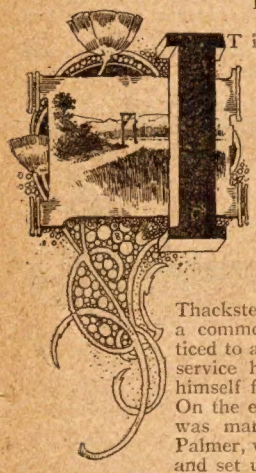
Next week we shall describe the refined torture of the Bell Collar, the fiendishly-cruel Spanish Mouth Pear, and the iniquities of the Vehmgericht.

Dick Turpin

"Villain, a horse. Villain, I say; give me a horse to fly!"
—GEORGE PEELE,
"Battle of Alcazar."

THE TRUE STORY OF THE INFAMOUS HIGHWAYMAN.

PART I.



IT is remarkable that the character which this notorious offender is generally supposed to have possessed for gallantry and courage, and which in one instance has been deemed of sufficient importance to fit him for one of the heroes of a romance*, upon being examined, appears to sink him to the low degree of a petty pilferer, of a heartless plunderer, and even of a brutal murderer.

Turpin was the son of a farmer named John Turpin, at Thackstead, in Essex; and having received a common school education, was apprenticed to a butcher in Whitechapel, in whose service he at an early age distinguished himself for the brutality of his disposition. On the expiration of his apprenticeship, he was married to a young woman named Palmer, who resided at East Ham, in Essex, and set up in business for himself; but he had not been thus occupied long, before he sought to decrease his expenditure in trade by stealing his neighbours' cattle, and cutting them up and selling them in his shop. His proceedings, however, received an unexpected check; for having stolen two oxen from a Mr. Giles at Plaistow, he drove them straight home; but two of Giles' servants having obtained sufficient evidence of the robbery, a warrant was obtained for his apprehension, and he only evaded the officers who were in search of him by making his escape from the back window of his house at the very moment when they were entering the door.

Having retreated to a place of security, he found means to inform his wife where he was concealed, and she furnished him with money, with which he travelled into the Hundreds of Essex, where he joined a gang of smugglers, with whom he was for some time successful. A body of the Custom-house officers, however, by one fortunate stroke, deprived him of all his ill-acquired gains. Thrown out of this kind of business, he connected himself with a gang of deer-stealers, the principal part of whose depredations were committed on Epping Forest, and the parks in its neighbourhood; but their efforts not succeeding to the expectation of the robbers, they determined to commence housebreaking. Their plan was to fix on a particular house, and while one of them knocked at the door, the others rushed in, and seized whatever they thought fit.

The first attack of this kind was at the house of Mr. Strype, an old man who kept a chandler's shop at Watford, whom they robbed of all the money in his possession, but did not offer him any personal violence.

The well-known story of placing the old woman on the fire at Loughton is thus related by the original historian of the life of our hero:—

"Turpin now acquainted his associates that there was an old woman at Loughton who was in possession of seven or eight hundred pounds, whereupon they agreed to rob her; and when they came to the door, one of them knocked, and the rest forcing their way into the house, tied handkerchiefs over the eyes of the old woman and her maid.

"This being done Turpin demanded what money was in the house; and the owner hesitating to tell him, he threatened to set her on the fire if she did not make an immediate discovery. Still, however, she refused to give the desired information: on which the villains actually placed her on the fire, where she sat till the tormenting pains compelled her to discover her hidden treasure; so that the robbers possessed themselves of above four hundred pounds, and decamped with the booty."

On the 11th of January, 1735, Turpin and five of his companions went to the house of Mr. Saunders a rich farmer at Charlton, in Kent, between seven and eight in the evening, and, having knocked at the door, asked if Mr. Saunders was at home. Being answered in the affirmative, they rushed into the house, and found Mr. Saunders, with his wife and friends, playing at cards in the parlour. They told the company that they should remain uninjured if they made no disturbance, and having made prize of a silver snuff-box which lay on the table, part of the gang stood guard over the company, while the others attended Mr. Saunders through the house, and, breaking open his escritoires and closets, stole above a hundred pounds, exclusive of plate. During these transactions the servant-maid ran upstairs, barred the door of her room, and called out, "Thieves!" with a view of alarming the neighbourhood; but the robbers broke open the door, secured her, and then robbed the house of all the valuable property they had not before taken.

Having stayed in the house a considerable time, they packed up their booty and departed, declaring that if any of the family gave the least alarm within two hours, or advertised the marks of the stolen plate, they would return and murder them at a future time. Retiring to an empty house in Ratcliffe Highway, they deposited the stolen effects till a purchaser was found for them.

Their next attack was upon the house of Mr. Sheldon, near Croydon, in Surrey, where they obtained a considerable booty in money and jewels. They then arranged the robbery of Mr. Lawrence, of Edgware, in Middlesex, to the commission of which they proceeded on the 4th of February. They arrived at Edgware at about five in the evening, and, went to the scene of their intended outrage at about seven o'clock, when Mr. Lawrence had just discharged his workmen. Quitting their horses at the outer gate, they seized a sheep-boy, whom they compelled to conduct them to the house-door, under fear of death; and they there obliged him to procure the opening of the door by knocking and calling to his fellow-servants. As soon as the door was open, they all rushed in, and presenting pistols, they seized Mr. Lawrence and his servant, threw a cloth over their faces, and, taking the boy into another room, demanded what fire-arms were in the house. He replied that there was only an old gun, which they broke in pieces. They then bound Mr. Lawrence and his man, and made them sit by the boy; and Turpin, searching the gentleman, took from him a guinea, a Portugal piece, and some silver; but, not being satisfied with this booty, they forced him to conduct them upstairs, where they broke open a closet, and stole some money and plate. Being dissatisfied, they swore that they would murder Mr. Lawrence if some further booty was not produced, and one of them took a kettle of water from the fire, and threw it over him; but it providentially happened not to be hot enough to scald him. In the interim, the maid-servant, who was churning butter in the dairy, hearing a noise in the house, apprehended some mischief, on which she blew out her candle to screen herself; but, being found in the course of their search, one of the miscreants compelled her to go upstairs, where he gratified his brutal passion by force. They then robbed the house of all the valuable effects they could find, locked the family into the parlour, threw the key into the garden, and took their ill-gotten plunder to London.

The particulars of this atrocious robbery being represented to the king, a proclamation was issued, offering a reward of fifty guineas for the apprehension of the offenders, and a pardon to any one of the parties who should impeach his associates. This, however, was unsuccessful, and the robbers continued their depredations as before. On the 7th of February, six of them assembled at the White Bear, in Drury Lane, and they agreed to rob Mr. Francis, a farmer, at Marylebone. They accordingly proceeded to his house forthwith, and having bound all the servants and Mr. Francis in the stable, they rushed into the house, tied Mrs. Francis, her daughter, and the maid-servant, and beat them in a most cruel manner. One of the thieves then stood sentry while the rest rifled the house of many valuables, which they conveyed to London.

Hereupon a reward of one hundred pounds was offered for the capture of the gang; in consequence of which two of

* In Mr. Ainsworth's romance of "Rookwood," Turpin is one of the most striking characters.

them were taken into custody, tried, convicted on the evidence of an accomplice, and hanged in chains; and the whole band being dispersed, Turpin went into the country to renew his depredations on the public, in any new line of business which might strike his fancy. On his way towards Cambridge he fell in with a young man of gentlemanly appearance, who was well mounted, and expecting a tolerable booty, he presented a pistol to his breast and demanded his money. The only answer which he received, however, was a hearty peal of laughter; and when the highwayman, enraged at the supposed insult cast upon him, threatened instant destruction to the stranger in case of any further refusal, the latter exclaimed: "What! dog eat dog? Come, come, brother Turpin, if you don't know me, I know you, and shall be glad of your company." The mystery was soon solved; the stranger was no other than King, the gentleman highwayman, and a bargain of partnership was struck between them, which terminated only with the death of our hero's new associate, by the hand of his companion in iniquity. Joined now in a common cause against the public, they committed a great number of robberies, until at length they were so well known that no public-house would receive them as guests. Thus situated, they fixed on a spot between the King's Oak and the Loughton Road, on Epping Forest, where they made a cave which was large enough to receive them and their horses. The cave was enclosed within a sort of thicket of bushes and brambles, through which they could look and see passengers on the road, while they remained unobserved; and from this station they used to issue, and robbed such a number of persons, that at length the very pedlars who travelled the road carried fire-arms for their defence.

Having taken a ride as far as Bungay, in Suffolk, the robbers observed two young countrywomen receive fourteen pounds for corn, on which Turpin resolved to rob them of the money. King objected, saying it was a pity to rob such pretty girls; but Turpin was obstinate, and obtained the booty. Upon their return home on the following day, they stopped a Mr. Bradle, of London, who was riding in his chariot with his children. The gentleman, seeing only one robber, was preparing to make resistance, when King called to Turpin to hold the horses, and they took from him his watch, money, and an old mourning-ring; but returned the latter, as he declared that its intrinsic value was trifling. Finding that they readily parted with the ring, he asked them what he must give for the watch: on which King said to Turpin, "What say you, Jack (by which name he always called him), he seems to be a good, honest fellow; shall we let him have the watch?" Turpin answered, "Do as you please." Whereupon King said, "You must pay six guineas for it. We never can sell them for more, though the watch should be worth six-and-thirty." The gentleman therefore received the watch, and said that the money should be left at the Dial, in Birchin Lane, where they might receive it.

The greatest crime of which Turpin appears to have been guilty was committed soon after this—it was that of murder. The active inquiries which the police of the day were making after him and his companion, obliged them to separate; but Turpin, being less wary than King, continued to inhabit their old dwelling in the forest. The tempting offer of £100 reward induced the servant of a gentleman, named Thompson, and a higgler, to go out in the hope of capturing the highwayman; and Turpin, being unaware of their object, and seeing them approach his cave with a gun, mistook them for poachers. He called to them, telling them that there were no hares in that thicket, upon which the servant exclaimed, "No, but I have found a Turpin," and instantly presenting his gun, he called upon him to surrender. Turpin spoke to him in a friendly way, but retreating from him at the same time, he seized his own pistol and shot him dead on the spot, the higgler running off with the greatest precipitation. The consequence of this most detestable act was that a great outcry was raised against the highwayman, and he was compelled to quit the place on which he had hitherto relied for his concealment. His next place of refuge was in Hertfordshire; and he sent a letter to his wife to meet him at a public-house in the town of Hertford, but going to keep his appointment he met a butcher, to whom he owed a sum of money. The latter demanded payment, and Dick promised to get the money of his wife, who was in the next room; but while the butcher was hinting to some of his acquaintance that the person present was Turpin, and that they might take him into custody after he had received his debt, the highwayman made his escape through a window, and rode off with great expedition.

DICK TURPIN MEETS TOM KING.

TO BE CONTINUED.

THE

Morgue of Paris

MOST GRUESOME SIGHT IN THE GAY CITY ON THE SEINE.

Though "Dead Men tell no Tales," here corpses are preserved as Human Documents. Machine-made Arctic Temperature arrests decay, while laggard justice tracks the murderers down.

Notre Dame.

N the banks of the Seine, just behind the sombre Cathedral of Notre Dâme, in the position indicated by the small arrow in the initial letter of this article, stands one of the most romantic, yet the most terrible of all the public show buildings in Paris. Day after day throngs pass through the small Doric House, which in its exterior appearance is not unlike the Magazine in Hyde Park, impelled by the same spirit of morbid curiosity. They come to view the unknown dead, for the spot is the famous Morgue of the French capital. British peeress, dainty American lady, high-born Parisian dame mingle with the labourer, the "Apache" and the slatternly fish-hawker, jostling one another as they indulge in one of the "pleasures of the Gay City," by gazing at a few corpses! Our French friends say that "the English take their pleasures sadly," but we have not yet descended to making a public exhibition of the unknown occupants of our mortuaries.

But in the crowd there are some who have come for a far different purpose to their fellows. They are the people who, having missed some dear one, daily visit the home of the dead, fearful lest they shall find their loved friend there, yet disappointed when they fail in their search. Heartbreaking knowledge is better than agonising suspense. And out of the tragic sorrows of these stricken mourners the light-hearted visitors derive amusement. The shriek of a widow, recognising her husband's mutilated body; the heart-broken wail of the bereaved mother, the smothered sobs of the lover when he sees the corpse of his sweetheart—all provide entertainment for the sightseers. Paris panders to the emotional.

Enough of this. We have come to inspect the Morgue, and we will enter. What do we see? Simply a long room with a breast-high barrier, behind which is a large pane of glass, on the other side of which stand a number of wheeled trestles, strongly reminiscent of the police ambulances which are so familiar to us in the streets of our great cities; but on them? This bloated, swollen mass once lived and breathed and moved as you do. Who knows what terrible impulse led him to the banks of the sluggardly-flowing Seine, from which river his decomposed corpse was this morning taken. To look at he is repulsive, but perhaps to one woman he is dear, and possibly several children are to-day fatherless. Yet his name is not known, and till he is recognised there he will lie, with distorted head propped up, till a sudden cry, a groan, or, maybe, a curse tells the attendants that his identity is established.

On the next stand reposes the body of a frail young girl. Reposes is the only word, for she seems as if asleep, and every instant one hopes to see her bosom rise and fall with the returning life breath. But look again! Is not that a bullet wound in the marble temple? We ask one of the "Boys of the Morgue," and he tells us that for eight months she has lain immovable, exposed to the stares of the public. She was found dead in the streets. Is it credible that for so long she has lain there, and that corruption has not touched her fair body? She had been delicately nurtured—that is obvious from the dainty garments which are laid across the body to preserve decency as well as to aid in her identification. Here is a mute drama. Murder or suicide has brought this poor young thing into the "boite à glace"; but the sightseer does not think of this. To him she is but a detail in an exhibition!

Here we see a child, wrapped neatly in its night-clothes, smiling peacefully, her long, golden tresses spread out around her head like a halo. Why is this innocent mite lying on these cold slabs? "Death from starvation and exposure," was the doctor's verdict; that is all that is known about her. She was found unconscious by a gendarme and taken to the nearest hospital, but she died a few minutes after her arrival, so she came to the deathly embrace of the Morgue. There is the natural presumption of murder, for children do not run about the street in their night-dresses. Only a few hours have elapsed since she was found, and the tragedy-loving grisettes are lingering in the building, hoping to witness "a scene," when the recognition takes place. We ask if the relatives of the lifeless forms reposing on the tables ever faint when they discover their lost ones. "Mais, oui," answers the guardian, with a shrug of his shoulders. "What would you have?"

These are not the only occupants of the chamber. Every one of the ten or twelve tables bears its ghastly burden; but we have not space to describe their awful freight.

On the walls of the public part of the chamber hang huge frames containing many photographs, as many as two hundred being usually on view. These are the portraits of subjects lying in another part of the building, and they are placed there in the hopes that some day a face may be recognised and further particulars of the tragedy which brought the poor victims there may be brought to light. The identity of the individual may be known, but the police want more clues, and thus they trust they will possibly obtain them. Glancing at the pictures we cannot help recognising faces which have appeared in the illustrated papers. There is the noseless face of the "Man cut into pieces," with whom we shall have more to do later on, and in a glass-case on the wall adjacent can be seen a portion of the cloth in which one of the pieces of the mutilated remains were wrapped. Below it is a notice offering a reward of 300 francs for any definite information about the crime. Other relics are also there, awaiting the day when someone will notify the officials that they recognise them. Truly the room is a veritable picture gallery of crime, rendered more awful by the statuesque figures behind the plate-glass screen.

This is all of the Morgue that the general public sees, but there is a small world behind this single chamber, peopled with the dead, and with the belongings of the dead, which, by the courtesy of the Director, we will now explore.

So we pass through the door and are given in charge of an attendant. First we inquire how it is that the bodies we have seen are not in any way decomposed. "That is easily explained," remarks our guide, and he opens the

THE MORGUE (EXTERIOR)

entrance to the inner half of the "exhibition chamber." He is quite right. The temperature is that of the Arctic regions, being about twenty degrees below freezing point. The corpses are as hard as marble, and all decay is arrested.

Next we are shown the machinery employed to keep the

temperature of the various chambers at the proper degree of cold. Day and night the engines are at work, for any failure in the refrigerating would speedily convert the Morgue into a pest-house. As it is, there is no smell, no germs, no danger to health.

Another apartment is devoted to storing the garments of the unknown dead, who have not been preserved because the post-mortem examination has shown that they died from natural causes. Each bundle of clothes is sterilised and then placed in a labelled bag, awaiting the day when it might be claimed. After looking at this "wardrobe," we proceed to another chamber.

At the first glance it looks like the record room in a lawyer's office. All round the walls are drawers, with metal handles, each bearing a numbered ticket, and no stretch of the imagination is necessary for one to conclude that they contain documents connected with famous crimes. The attendant smiles grimly. "True, monsieur, they do contain documents of celebrated crimes," he says; "but what documents? The very proof of the committal of murder!"

With a dexterous jerk he draws out one of the receptacles. Again he is right—the documentary proof is there! It is the very body of a victim, frozen into the consistency of stone, waiting to be used as evidence against some murderer at present unknown. The subject of some terrible tragedy, once identified, is taken to this "Columbarium"—as it is called—and there kept.

"Now," remarks our guide, "I will show you some of the celebrated cases which we have preserved. You noticed the portrait of the 'Man chopped into pieces'? Well, here he is." Out comes the drawer, and before us, pieced together as carefully as if life depended upon it, lie the remains of the unfortunate gentleman. Joint is fitted to joint, the head attached to the body; even tiny fragments of flesh have been placed in position. But one feature is missing—the assassin retained his victim's nose, either as a memento, or to prevent identification.

Next we are shown the corpse of a colonel who was found dead in the Bois de Boulogne. He had been shot, and as the bullet wound was at the back of the head, there was not the least doubt that he had been murdered. "He has been here for six years," comments the Morgue Boy. "See how hard he is!" and he struck the body with his fist. The petrified flesh gave out a sound like hard wood. At first it seemed like desecration of the dead to touch him, but reflection came to our aid and we remembered that he was insensible to all blows, to all pain, after that one awful wound in his skull.

Another compartment contained all that was left of Madame Frizier and her infant daughter, who were murdered by a beggar to obtain a paltry sum of money. The inhuman monster who perpetrated the dreadful crime has never been discovered, but when he falls into the hands of justice he will again meet these two damning proofs of his villainy.

"This is interesting," says the guide, as he opens yet another receptacle and shows us a human head. "It was picked up in one of the suburbs of Paris one winter's night, and though six persons have identified it each one has sworn that it belonged to a different individual. No trace of the rest of the body has yet come to light." With evident gusto

THE INTERIOR OF THE MORGUE

he picks up the gruesome article, and wishes to demonstrate how it had been severed from the original owner, but we had seen enough. The whole chamber is horrible! Each drawer is a lidless coffin, over which is wafted continuously a stream of ice-cold air; and most contain a corpse.

"Silence!" cries a voice at the door. "Stand back," whispers our guide. We do so. A little group enters.

"To see No. 264," curtly announces an official in uniform. The "Morgue Boy" stands back, and the commissionaire draws out a shelf.

"My God!" exclaims the aged man. "Our Frank! Murdered! We knew nothing! We were in Brazil! They told us we should find him here! It is horrible! Monstrous! Who has done this? Justice! Justice!"

The mother stood silent, tears streaming down her face. An official voice recalled her.

"Have you identified the body?"

"Yes."

"Step into the office and sign the papers. Close the drawer, Jules."

"But—burial, monsieur? Christian burial for our son!" faltered the stricken father.

"Impossible for ten years, unless the murderer is found first," answered the officer.

"He has been dead for several years," protested the parent, "and he was always a good Catholic."

"That matters not!" responded the representative of authority. "He has been dead nine years and four months exactly. He will be buried in eight months and one day."

Our blood stands in our veins as we watch this tragic recognition. The horror of the parents; their grief, their despair, and their pious desire for Christian burial for their child would affect any Englishman. But the Law is the Law in France, as it is in England, and every murdered body must be preserved for ten years unless in the meantime the murderer is discovered. When that period has passed from the commission of a crime, no action can be taken by the French police.

IDENTIFIED AFTER NINE YEARS.

"Would you see any more 'subjects'?" asks our guide.

"No, thank you, we have seen enough. It is terrible!"

"Will the gentlemen walk this way?"

We do so, and we find ourselves in a lofty room, with white-tiled walls. At one end a small group of men, several being obviously servants of the Morgue, are engaged round a table. We advance, after the attendant has exclaimed, "By order of the Director," and are horrified to see that the table bears the naked body of a man. Knives, saws, scales, buckets of water, and other fearsome adjuncts of the pathologist's calling are on small tables round. "We are performing a post-mortem," says an elderly gentleman. "Would you like to look on?"

In spite of the feeling of revulsion which steals over us, our eyes are riveted on the ghastly object on the table, and for a moment we watch the deft fingers of the Morgue surgeon and his skilled assistants at work. They have only just commenced, but soon the scene becomes more gory, and we rush from the room to get a gasp of fresh air. Our cicerone tells us that the post-mortem room in the Morgue is one of the best equipped in Europe, and with the pride of an enthusiast adds, "You should see it, Messieurs, when we have ten bodies in there!" We thank him, but would rather not; one is quite enough to satisfy us!

And now we visit one of the most interesting of all the sights in this house of the dead. A door is opened and we see a large, square room, barely furnished.

At one end is a small table and a few chairs, at the other a single chair, but in the middle of the room stands an object which has struck terror into every murderer who has ever been arrested in Paris. This is but a table, the top of which revolves on a pivot—a plain table of wood, covered with lead, such as is used by surgeons all over the world for the purpose of performing post-mortem examinations. Yet in French Criminal Law this little table plays a part which to Englishmen is unknown.

We are fortunate, for as we pass the portal we notice that a "juge d'instruction," with the curious "béret," which is worn by all French advocates on his head, is sitting in the centre of the group of chairs, with three other advocates, who act as assessors with him. In the single chair sits a pork butcher, wearied, dishevelled, and throughout the room are scattered police officers. For one instant the pork butcher is led out of the apartment, and four "Boys of the Morgue" enter, bearing a burden which is laid on the table. Then the "charcutier" returns.

"Michael Flavas, you are accused of the murder of Valerie Saintard," says the judge. "Here, in the presence of the dead woman, what have you to say?"

With a swift movement the cloth is withdrawn from the "something" on the table, and the murderer is confronted with the mutilated corpse of his victim! Was anything more dramatic ever devised? When last Flavas saw Valerie she was alive, but from a gaping wound in her chest her life-blood was pouring. To-day he is placed face to face with her body! Can he say aught, without the fear of the accusing hand of his murdered love pointing him out as the culprit?

He commenced: "In the presence of the body of Valerie Saintard I——" At this point he broke down. We will leave the room. Such scenes are for the "cold men of the law," not for the public.

Thus have we seen the Morgue, penetrated into the chambers where officials only are supposed to enter, and from our tour we have certainly learnt one lesson in criminology. Cremation will stand in the way of justice; preservation of the "corpus delicti" is undoubtedly for the benefit of the nation.

HOW DR. PRITCHARD POISONED HIS WIFE.

When accused, he tried to implicate his servant-girl, with whom he had formed a liaison.

Oh! think what anxious moments pass between
The birth of plots, and their last fatal periods,
Oh! 'tis a dreadful interval of time
Filled up with horror all, and big with death!
ADDISON—(*Cato*, Act I., sc. 3).

PART I.

IN the year 1864 there might be seen in Clarence Place, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, a door bearing a brass plate inscribed, "Dr. Edward Pritchard, Physician and Surgeon," and from the number of visitors that the doctor seemed to have, one would be inclined to think that he enjoyed a fair practice among his neighbours. Dr. Pritchard was a person to command respect; he was tall, well-built, and of a very dignified appearance, while his manner with his patients inspired confidence. He had been married for about fifteen years to a Miss Taylor, the daughter of an Edinburgh merchant, and five children were the issue of the marriage. Mrs. Pritchard and the four youngest children lived at Clarence Place, the eldest daughter residing with her grandmother, Mrs. Taylor. Two lodgers, named King and Connell, and a couple of servants, Lattimer, the cook, and Mary M'Leod, a girl of seventeen, the housemaid, completed the household.

About the middle of October, 1864, Mrs. Pritchard was suddenly taken ill. Continual attacks of vomiting followed each meal, and her strength began to wear away. For the good of her health she went to Edinburgh, and stayed with her mother from the end of November till just before Christmas, when she returned to Clarence Place, apparently perfectly well. The air of Glasgow, however, does not seem to have agreed with her, for when she had been at home for a few days her malady returned, and she became subject to frequent intermittent attacks of vomiting.

Lattimer, the cook, had given notice to leave, and was due to go to her fresh situation on the 2nd of February, 1865, but at the request of Mrs. Pritchard she postponed her departure till the 16th. Early in that month Mrs. Pritchard was seized with a more violent attack than usual, and, turning to Lattimer, said: "Oh, Catherine, I have lost my senses! I was never so bad as this before. I was well at Edinburgh, but here I am ill again." That attack, however, soon passed off, but on the 14th of February Mrs. Pritchard was seized with a violent cramp. The malady attacked her while Dr. Pritchard, Mary M'Leod, and Catherine were in the room. Dr. Pritchard seemed very much alarmed at the suddenness of the attack, and burst out crying. His wife, however, checked him, saying: "Don't cry, Edward! If you do, you are a hypocrite, all doctors are hypocrites."

She does not appear to have believed her last sentence, for almost immediately she despatched Mary M'Leod to fetch Dr. Gairdner, a medical man who had attended her in her previous illness, but had not seen her professionally since the September of 1864. It may be asked why Pritchard, as a doctor, did not himself treat his own wife, and thus avoid any suspicion attaching to him, but we would point out that medical etiquette demands that a doctor shall not prescribe for his own relations, but shall invite the assistance of one of his colleagues, whose services are always given gratis.

Gairdner, of course, arrived as fast as he could, and found Mrs. Pritchard very excited and her heart beating rapidly. Pritchard was standing beside his wife. The patient told Dr. Gairdner that she had taken chloroform, and that she disliked it very much. She did not say whether it was by her husband's advice that she had made use of the drug, nor did he volunteer any information. Lattimer remained with her mistress all that day and throughout the night. The doctor called again next morning; but there was little change in the condition of Mrs. Pritchard.

In order that his wife might have every care and attention, Dr. Pritchard wrote to his mother-in-law, Mrs. Taylor, and invited her to come to Glasgow and help nurse her daughter. This the worthy old lady did, arriving at Clarence Place a few days before Lattimer was leaving. Needless to say, Mrs. Taylor was shocked beyond measure at the change in her child, who had become thin and pale, though ordinarily she was a stout, well-favoured lady, and she pointed out the alteration to Dr. Pritchard, who said that it pained him deeply, but that it was not an unusual effect of gastric fever, from which disease his wife was suffering.

Two days after the arrival of Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Pritchard had another attack. It began in the afternoon, and was not so violent as the last one, though the cramp in the limbs and abdomen was the same. She had had her luncheon at one o'clock, and had lain down to rest for a short while when the malady seized her. Mrs. Taylor did all that she could for her daughter, and arranged that she should sleep with her, the husband occupying the spare room.

During the whole time that his mother-in-law was staying with him Dr. Pritchard took his meals at home, dining about half-past three in the afternoon, while his wife usually had her principal meal between one and two. Sometimes he was present when his wife was dining, and sometimes not. The food was prepared by Mary Patterson, who succeeded Latimer as cook, and was carried to the patient by Mary M'Leod.

Now, here it may be said that Mary M'Leod was a good-looking girl for her class of life, and knew that she was fair. When they met in the course of the daily routine, Dr. Pritchard often used to chaff his maid, and gradually the

"There's my poor mother!"

barrier which exists between master and servant broke down, till at length they regarded one another more as friends than as employer and employée. Whether the doctor deliberately planned her seduction from the very beginning we do not

know, but certain it is that shortly before the first illness of Mrs. Pritchard, Mary M'Leod surrendered her innocence to her master, and thenceforward nocturnal meetings were the rule rather than the exception. It was at the time he first gained entire possession of M'Leod that Dr. Pritchard told her that, if Mrs. Pritchard died before Mary did, he would marry her, and he repeated this to her on subsequent occasions. The change was certainly a dazzling prospect; to be raised from the position of a household drudge to that of wife of a prosperous physician; and it is small wonder that Mary looked on the doctor as really her property, and begrudged the kisses which he gave to his wife. But to return to the family history.

A few days after her arrival, Mrs. Taylor also was taken ill, and declared that she must have caught her daughter's sickness. To this supposition Dr. Pritchard rejoined that it was not at all improbable, as they had all had touches of gastric fever at different times. This satisfied the good lady for the moment. About midnight that day she was found insensible in a chair in her daughter's room, and died the same night. A Dr. Paterson was called in before she expired, and did what he could for her; but the certificate of death was signed by Dr. Pritchard, and the document stated that the old lady—she was over seventy years of age—had succumbed to an apoplectic fit following a paralytic seizure. Naturally, old Mr. Taylor and his son, Dr. Taylor, were notified at once, and they came to Clarence Place to make arrangements for the funeral, which was to take place in the family vault at Grange Cemetery, Edinburgh. Thither the body was conveyed on February 27th, three days after Mrs. Taylor's death, Dr. Pritchard attending the funeral with his wife's family. He then returned to Glasgow to look after his wife.

The death of her mother preyed heavily on Mrs. Pritchard's mind, and she rapidly got worse. Sometimes her reason wandered, and she kept asking the attendants to chafe her poor mother's hands, and not to trouble about her, but to pay attention to Mrs. Taylor. On March the 17th, Mrs. Pritchard had an acute attack of delirium and called out to Mary M'Leod, who was in constant attendance on her, "See, Mary, there's my poor mother dead again—take her into the bedroom!" On the following day, Saturday, March 18th, she died, and her bereaved husband signed the certificate of death, giving the cause as gastric fever.

Arrangements for the funeral to take place in the same grave as Mrs. Taylor were put in order at once, and Dr. Pritchard accompanied the body down to Edinburgh, where it was deposited in his father-in-law's house to await interment. On the day before the funeral was to take place, the doctor returned to Glasgow, intending to make the journey to Edinburgh next morning to pay the last respects to his dead wife, but he never returned of his own free will.

The death of Mrs. Taylor, though not without suspicion, had attracted little attention on account of the lady's great age, but when a second death occurred within a month of the first one, the police began to make inquiries, and on Dr. Pritchard alighting at Glasgow station, he was arrested on the charge of murdering his wife and mother-in-law. He was conveyed at once to the police offices, and information sent immediately to Edinburgh to seize the corpse of Mrs. Pritchard and hand it over to Drs. Maclagan, Gamgee, and Littlejohn for post mortem examination.

MARY FOUND HER ON THE LANDING DRESSED IN HER NIGHT-GOWN.

The result of the examination showed that death had not resulted from gastric fever, nor, indeed, from any natural cause, and more complete investigation revealed minute particles of antimony in the liver. The case now assumed a grave aspect, and the authorities obtained a warrant for the exhumation of the body of Mrs. Taylor. This having been effected, the internal portions were submitted to analysis by Professor Maclagan, Dr. Littlejohn, and Professor Penny, the celebrated Glasgow analyst, and after a protracted examination these scientists reported that death was due in this case also to poisoning with antimony. On these facts being elicited, Dr. Pritchard was fully committed for trial on the charge of murdering Jane Taylor and Mary Jane Pritchard.

The trial commenced on the 3rd of July, 1865, in the High Court of Justiciary at Edinburgh, whither the doctor was conveyed in custody. On the bench sat the Lord Justice Clerk, Lord Ardmillan, and Lord Jerviswood, and the Solicitor General for Scotland led for the Crown, while Mr.

Rutherford Clark appeared for the prisoner. The social position of the prisoner caused the public to take a great interest in the case, and the court was packed during the five days the trial lasted.

According to the custom of Scots law, which differs a good deal from English criminal procedure, the two charges of murder were tried together and not, as would be done in England, one after the other. The poisons were alleged to be antimony tartrate, aconite and opium, given in tapioca, beer, and a medicine called Batley's Sedative Solution in the case of Mrs. Taylor, and in the case of Mrs. Pritchard, antimony tartrate and aconite, administered in eggflip, cheese, beer, wine, medicine and other articles of food not specified.

As is the custom in Scotland, the jurors were left to gather the facts of the case from the witnesses, and were not addressed by counsel till all the evidence on both sides had been heard. We will take the principal witnesses and see what they had to say. The first to be put into the box and sworn in the solemn Scotch fashion was Catherine Lattimer. She said that she had been in the service of the prisoner for a period of ten years, acting in the capacity of cook. She had left his service on the 16th of February, and could therefore only speak of events before that date. Her mistress had been in good health up to October, 1864, but from that time onwards had been ailing. She had gone to Edinburgh for a short time, and when she returned she was in perfect health, but had not been back for very long before she again became ill. On a certain day in February, which she fixed as February 13th, Mary M'Leod came into the kitchen and said that her mistress wanted some tapioca. Mary brought her a packet and she made about half-a-breakfast cupful, adding nothing but boiling water. Shown the packet by the Solicitor General, she recognised it as the one which had been given to her by M'Leod. Mrs. Taylor took it upstairs, and both she and her daughter complained of it being tasteless, and they divided the amount between them. Both ladies were attacked with sickness after eating the tapioca.

Mary M'Leod next stepped into the box. She had been in service for two years. She remembered Mrs. Pritchard coming home from Edinburgh, and she remembered her attacks of sickness. They usually came on about an hour or so after meals. Mrs. Pritchard complained of thirst, heat in the head, and pain in the stomach. Mrs. Taylor came about the 10th of February, and during her visit sent witness to fetch a bottle of Batley's Sedative Solution. The bottle was the one found on Mrs. Taylor's body after death. Between six and seven on the evening of February 24th, Mrs. Taylor complained to her that she was not feeling very well, and thought that she had caught her daughter's illness. She got better in a short time, and sent witness for some sausages for supper. About nine o'clock witness saw Mrs. Taylor in the consulting room writing letters, and a few minutes later met her going up to her daughter's room. Almost immediately afterwards the bell was rung, and on proceeding upstairs witness found the old lady sitting insensible on a chair near Mrs. Pritchard's bed, with her head hanging down on her bosom. Dr. Paterson came about eleven at night, and Mrs. Taylor died shortly after midnight without regaining consciousness.

During the next three weeks Mrs. Pritchard continued in the same state, sick every day after meals. One evening the week before she died, witness was given a piece of soft cheese to take up to her mistress by Dr. Pritchard. After tasting it, Mrs. Pritchard asked her to do the same. She did so, and it burnt her throat. In the same week Mary Patterson gave her some eggflip to take upstairs; before adding water to it, witness left it in the pantry for a moment for the prisoner to add sugar to it, then she took it down to the kitchen and the water was poured on. The cook took a sip and remarked, "Oh, how bad it tastes." Mrs. Pritchard took a wineglassful and soon after was violently sick, as was Patterson.

On the afternoon of March 18th, Mrs. Pritchard got suddenly worse, and her mind wandered. Mary found her on the landing dressed in her night-gown. Witness took her back to bed and sat with her. Dr. Paterson was called, and prescribed for her. That night she slept in the same room as Mrs. Pritchard, and the prisoner was in bed with his wife. She heard the poor woman murmur, "Edward, don't sleep; I feel very faint." The prisoner got out of bed and sent her to fetch a mustard poultice to put on Mrs. Pritchard, but while she was out of the room the poor lady died.

Mary M'Leod then told the story of her relations with Dr. Pritchard, and she was sharply cross-examined by Mr. Clarke with a view to showing that on every occasion that the taking of food by Mrs. Pritchard was followed by sickness, she (Mary M'Leod) had had the food in her possession for several minutes.

Mary Patterson was the next witness, and she repeated the statement which M'Leod had made concerning the eggflip, and said that she was very sick herself after taking it, and did not recover till the following day. She beat up the egg in the pantry, and the prisoner then walked from the dining-room to the consulting room and returned with some sugar, which he put into the egg. M'Leod brought the mixture downstairs to the kitchen, and they then poured on the water. The eggflip had a horribly bitter taste, and it burned her throat. On the day that M'Leod had taken up the cheese to Mrs. Pritchard, witness found a crumb of it in the pantry, and ate it. It made her very sick.

On the night of Mrs. Taylor's death, it fell to Mary Patterson to assist in dressing the body. As she was doing so, a bottle fell out of the dead woman's pocket. It was the bottle produced. It was half full of a brown liquid which looked and smelt like laudanum. She showed it to Dr. Pritchard, and he raised up his hands and exclaimed, "Good heavens! has she taken all that since Tuesday? Mary,

"Has she taken all that?"

don't say anything about this, as it would never do for a man in my position to be spoken of. It would ruin my practice. Dr. Paterson, when first he saw my poor mother-in-law, said that she was paralysed on the left side."

On the night of Mrs. Pritchard's death, about half-past one, witness was called out of bed to make a mustard poultice. She took about ten minutes to make it, and when she brought it upstairs, she found Dr. Pritchard in bed with his wife. Her mistress was cold. The doctor proposed to apply the poultice, but witness said that nothing could be done for a dead body. The doctor then cried out, "Come back! come back, my darling Mary Jane! Do not leave your dear Edward!" and he added, "What a brute! what a heathen! So gentle, so mild!" He then asked the witness to shoot him, and, in answer to her rebuke, in which she asked him how he would appear before a righteous God after taking his own life, he said, "True, Patterson; you're the wisest and kindest woman I ever saw."

TO BE CONTINUED.

THE celebrated Curran was one day cross-examining a horse-jockey's servant, and asked his master's age. "I never put my hand in his mouth to try," answered the witness. The laugh was against the counsel, till he retorted, "You did perfectly right, friend, for your master is said to be a great bite."

A PERSONAL REMINISCENCE OF AN EXECUTION AT KIRKDALE.

A Palsied Hangman .. .. and a Yielding Rope.

BY THE EDITOR.

James O'Connor.

ONE September afternoon in the year 1873 I was present in the Assize Court at Liverpool. It was merely a commercial case in which I was interested, but when twelve men had entered the Assize Room and had been sworn upon the jury, they were suddenly ordered to leave the box and stand down while twelve other men, who had just passed through a little door at the back, took their places. What were they doing there? We did not know, but a friendly official told us that a trial for murder had been heard just before our case was called on, and that these were the gentlemen of the jury who had returned to give their verdict. "If we had not thought that they would have been longer, we should not have started on this fresh case," he added.

Back into the dock was brought an Irishman—one, James O'Connor—a man of medium height, well favoured, with a small black moustache, and the blue eyes which mark the Milesian all over the world. He glanced nervously round the court, scanning the faces of the jurors, and then fixed his eyes on Mr. Justice Brett, who was presiding.

"How say you, gentlemen?" asked the Clerk. "Do you find the prisoner, James O'Connor, guilty of the murder of James Gaffney or not?"

"Guilty," was the reply.

Assuming the black cap, the Judge then commenced to recapitulate the details of the crime of the prisoner. It was of the usual sordid nature—jealousy of a woman named Shears leading O'Connor to stab Gaffney to death. The learned Judge, in sympathetic tones, pointed out to the convict how indulging his passions had placed him in the awful position in which he then stood. He begged him to repent and to make his peace with heaven, and was continuing to give him what consolation lay in his power, when a voice was heard from the dock:

"You'll make me laugh at you directly!"

Imagine the effect of this consummate impudence on the kindly Judge. In an instant his tone changed from one of pity to one of harshness. "And the sentence of the Law is," he continued, "that you be taken from this court to the place from whence you came, and thence to a place of lawful execution, and that there you be hanged by the neck until you be dead, and after your execution that your body be buried within the precincts of the gaol in which you shall last have been confined prior to your execution. And may the Lord have mercy on your soul!"

To this the chaplain reverently added, "Amen!"

I was at that time a young journalist, and deeply interested in all appertaining to Crime. The colossal cheek of the prisoner so impressed me that I determined to be one of the little gathering of spectators who in those days were admitted to witness executions. Being well known in the town, I had not much difficulty in obtaining the necessary card of admission from the Chairman of the Visiting Justices, and on a bleak morning I presented myself at the door of Kirkdale Prison. A warder admitted me, in company with five other press men, and we were shown into a yard, at one corner of which stood THE GALLOWS. It was a permanent structure built of wood, the front being draped in black.

In the cold we waited, shivering, fearing to witness the very tragedy we had come to see. On the scaffold was a youngish man, fussing about, examining this, testing that. It was Marwood, then only an assistant hangman.

Presently we heard a gate swing back with a sudden clang, the sound of footsteps, and a voice exclaiming, "Ad Dominum cum tribularer clamavi; et exaudivit me" ("I called on the Lord when I was in trouble and He heard me"), the opening passages of the Roman Catholic service for the dead.

Nearer and nearer came the sounds, the steady tramp of footsteps being mingled with the piteous prayer, "Eternal rest give unto him, O Lord!" Then a little procession emerged from the doorway. The robed priest walked directly in front of the condemned, a bound figure—surely the saddest sight that man can gaze upon. Next hobbled an aged, palsied, trembling man—Calcraft, the official executioner. The fascination of the scene riveted my gaze on the culprit. The impudent swagger which he maintained in court was gone; but the Irishman's cheeks were not blanched by fear.

At the foot of the fatal tree, Father Bonté offered O'Connor a crucifix to kiss, which he did with evident devotion. I shuddered as Calcraft placed the rope round the victim's throat and drew it tight, and try as I would, I could not turn my eyes from the pitiful figure standing on the drop. The white-robed priest—last friend of the dying man on earth—read on.

A crash! A thud! The end has come! No; the rope flies loosely in the air! What has happened?

With a vault Father Bonté sprang into the pit, his priestly vestments flying in the wind. I followed him. Propped up against the wooden partition lay O'Connor, the broken rope around his neck, and the white cap over his eyes. The good cleric at once drew off the cap and loosened the noose, while he whispered words of consolation into the wretched felon's ear. But it was not to him that the condemned man turned. It was to *me*. Seizing my arm with his two pinioned hands he exclaimed:

"I stood it bravely, didn't I? You will let me off now, won't you? Let me off, do!"

Think of the horror of that appeal! "You will let me off, won't you?" And there was no power to do so. "There to be hanged by the neck until you are dead," was the dread sentence, and the Law must be obeyed.

The half-hanged man was supported by warders and taken behind the scaffold, while the other officials hurriedly procured a new rope, and then again he was placed in position. Calcraft pulled the lever, the drop fell, and James O'Connor was dead.

Searching through my scrap-book the other day I came across the following lines, clipped from one of the Northern papers of the time, which express the popular feeling of Liverpool with regard to this horrid tragedy:

"Hanged by the neck till you be dead!" So peals
The dreadful sentence, while shocked Nature reels.
The Angels wept when primal man first fell;
And Heavenly LOVE rang Eden's passing bell.
But Hell's own fiends must point at and deride
The CHRISTIAN Laws by which James Connor died.
"Vengeance is mine!" Yet we usurp the brand
Already poised in God's avenging hand.
Man's life is sacred. Christ Himself hath deigned
To wear the form which human sin hath stained.
It is no plea that men deserve to die:
"Thou shalt not kill" is thundered from the sky.
Though form and circumstance were ranged beside,
Connor, twice hung, was MURDERED ere he died!

O when will England, peerless, chiefest, best,
Call sense of feeling to her parent breast?
Mercy dictates the "Gibbet" should be hurled
Out from the confines of a Christian world.

Shame on the Laws which boast as their last hope
A palsied hangman and a yielding rope!

W. W. W., September 13, 1873.

The Man with the Carpet Bag

A QUAINT STORY OF LIFE IN LONDON IN 1832, INCIDENTAL TO THE CAREER OF HENRY MACNAMARA, WHO WAS TRANSPORTED FOR FELONY.

THE offences of which this person was guilty attracted considerable observation at the time of their discovery. He was taken into custody on the morning of Sunday, the 29th of April, 1832, at the Hummums Hotel, Covent Garden, on a charge of robbery, committed under somewhat remarkable circumstances, and on the following day he underwent an examination at Bow Street, before the sitting magistrate.

From the statement which was then made, it appeared that the prisoner had gone to the Hummums on the previous Saturday night, and had requested to be accommodated with a bed. His appearance was such as to lead to a supposition that he was a person of respectability, and there was no hesitation in complying with his desire. His luggage, which consisted only of a carpet-bag, was conveyed to the apartment assigned to his use, and, having partaken of a handsome supper, with its concomitants, he retired to rest. The Hummums, like its brethren under the piazza, was then, as it is now, a hotel much resorted to by single gentlemen or casual visitors to the metropolis; and, on the night in question, its accommodations were as much in request as usual. Major Hampton Lewis occupied a sleeping apartment on the floor beneath that in which the mysterious man's room was situated; and, on the same corridor, were four other bed-chambers, all of which were also in use. In the middle of the night, when the house was wrapt in quiet, Major Lewis was suddenly awoke by hearing some person in his apartment, and on looking up he saw a man, attired only in his shirt and trousers, as quietly as possible making his way towards the door, carrying off his gold watch, chain, and seals, and his purse in his hands. He jumped up and pursued the intruder, but did not succeed in catching him until he had reached the passage, when he seized him by the shirt and braces. The fellow struggled hard, and succeeded in extricating himself, and ran off upstairs; but the noise had by this time alarmed the other inmates of the house, and instant search was made for the thief. Every room was examined, and at last the constables, who by this time had been called in, arrived at that to which the prisoner had been conducted. They found him in bed; but, on their calling him up, they perceived that he still had his trousers on, and his braces and shirt were torn. The detached remnants of these articles were found, on examination, outside the door of Major Lewis's room, having evidently been torn off in the scuffle; and the watch and purse of that gentleman were also discovered on the stairs leading to the corridor in which the prisoner's apartment was situated. This was a chain of circumstances so conclusive, as denoting the guilt of the prisoner, that he was carried off in custody to the station-house. The uproar and confusion naturally created by a nocturnal event of so extraordinary a character, had, however, scarcely subsided, when four other gentlemen, who slept in the apartments adjoining that of Major Lewis, discovered that they too had been robbed. One gentleman missed a shirt-pin; another some English and French money, amounting to about £3 15s.; a third a loaded pistol, which he carried for his protection, and his purse, containing a considerable sum in gold and notes; while the rings and purse of the fourth had been purloined from his dressing-table. In a room opposite to that in which the prisoner had been placed to sleep, and which had not been occupied for several nights, the whole of these articles were found strewed indiscriminately about the floor, under the bed; and with them was also discovered a key, which, on examination, proved to fit the lock of the prisoner's carpet-bag.

These were the circumstances which were proved in evidence on the day of the first examination of the prisoner; but the extraordinary nature of his proceedings in this case struck the attention of the magistrate so forcibly, that he determined to remand him, in order that, if any other charges of a similar description existed against him, he might be made liable for them too. The prisoner was ordered, therefore, to be again brought up on the following Friday, and on that day a host of persons was in attendance, each more anxious than the rest to detail the circumstances of some robbery of which the prisoner had been guilty.

The evidence of the robberies at the Hummums Hotel having been first gone into, and the prisoner having been ordered to be indicted upon three of them—at the prosecution of Major Lewis, Mr. Courthold, of Barking, in Essex, and a young gentleman named John C. Millenden, who had put up at the hotel on his way to school from Bordeaux, where his parents lived—the other new cases were taken.

The first of these was preferred by a gentleman named Heath; and, from his evidence, and that of two other witnesses, it appeared, that at a late hour on the night of Friday, the 27th of April, the prisoner went to the Swan-with-Two-Necks, Lad Lane, and asked to be accommodated with a bed. His request was complied with, and he retired to his room, which was situated in a corridor built in the old-fashioned style, round the inn yard, and which was near to that to which Mr. Heath had been previously shown. In the course of the night, Davy, the porter at the inn, was disturbed by the loud barking of the watch-dog; he went to him to quiet him, but the sagacious animal was aware that there was an intruder stirring upon the premises, and conducted Davy to a dark kitchen, or cellar, where he found the prisoner. He pretended to have come from his room for a necessary purpose, and was allowed to return to his apartment. Soon afterwards, however, he escaped over the balustrades of the corridor, and from the yard, leaving his boots behind him. On the following morning Mr. Heath discovered that his money had been stolen from his room in the course of the night. Both the porter, and a witness who had seen the prisoner quit the inn yard, and had aided him in adjusting his cloak in the street, were able to speak positively to his identity, and he was committed for trial upon this charge also.

Many other cases were, at subsequent examinations, brought against him, which, however, were so similar in their character to those which have been already detailed, that it would be useless to enter into their history or description. The prisoner was recognised as having been guilty of almost innumerable offences within a very short period, and he was also identified by one of the keepers of Maidstone gaol as having made his escape from that prison, where he had been sentenced to be confined for three months as a pick-pocket.

On Monday, the 21st of May, 1832, the prisoner was tried at the Old Bailey upon the charges preferred against him, and verdicts of "Guilty" were returned. The crimes which he had committed rendered him liable to capital punishment, but the ends of justice, it was felt, would be amply satisfied by the permanent removal of this offender from the scenes of his former exploits, and from the opportunities of renewing his depredations.

Of a piece with the proceedings of this fellow, were those of a man who victimised nearly every hotel in every principal city or town in the kingdom, and who was universally known as "The man with the carpet-bag." A carpet-bag was an article of such a nature that it was unlikely the intentions of any persons would be suspected merely on account of his carrying such a means of transporting his luggage. In the case of the person to whom this epithet was applied, however, the carpet-bag was employed for purposes far different from those for which it was customarily used. His habit was to enter that house which presented the most seemly and comfortable aspect, and having partaken of a hearty supper, he would convey his "luggage," of which he always took the greatest care, to his apartment. In the morning it was invariably found that he had decamped, having generously left behind him the contents of his sack, which usually consisted of hay or straw, and a stray brickbat or two, and carried off in their place such portions of the bedclothes as he could conveniently stow away. The possession of a carpet-bag by a traveller was at one time looked upon by landlords and waiters as almost certain evidence of his being a swindler, and numerous are the occasions upon which such a supposition has created considerable inconvenience. The following letter, published in a newspaper of the period, happily hits off the miseries of a "man with a carpet-bag" searching for lodgings. It was addressed:

To the Editor of "Bell's Life in London."

SIR,—As a stranger in this town, perhaps I shall be excused for addressing you on a topic which may prove amusing to some

of your travelling readers, and prevent a series of mortifications to which, from the accidental circumstance of carrying a *carpet-bag*, they may be exposed. I arrived from Manchester on Monday afternoon last, having travelled the whole of the way outside of the coach. On alighting, I was as miserable as torpid circulation and pinching cold could make me. I had still energy enough left to give the guard and coachman their customary fee, and with my luggage, which consisted only of a *carpet-bag*, containing a change of apparel, and other matters, to set out in search of a tavern in which I was likely to enjoy the comforts of a good fire and a night's lodging. You will ask why I did not at once take up my quarters at the White Horse, Fetter Lane, where the coach stopped, and which, I had been informed, affords excellent accommodation at a reasonable price? I answer, that I have always had an objection to the bustle of a coach inn; and, I may add, I fancied I could get cheaper quarters elsewhere. Whether I was justified in this conclusion I will not stop to argue; you must take the facts as they come. I turned into Holborn, and went into the first coffee-house which met my eye; I do not know the sign. On entering the coffee-room, I placed my carpet-bag on the table, and commenced freeing myself from the wrapper which surrounded my throat, at the same time ringing the bell for the waiter. A smirking chap soon entered, and, casting a look at my bag, and then at me, must get, and on I went. The next house I approached looked clean and cheerful; and seeing a waiter standing at the door, I civilly asked him if they took in travellers? The fellow, who proved to be an Irishman, laughed, and replied, "Faith, we do, sir, when we can." "Then, perhaps, you'll take me in for the night?" said I; "I have just got off the Manchester coach, and want my dinner and a lodging." Once more did I notice the particular attention paid to my carpet-bag. "Be asy, old boy!" said the rascal, with a good-humoured grin "though we *take in* travellers, we don't mane to be *taken in* ourselves, so walk off with your four bones and your carpet-bag together"; and, turning upon his heel, he marched into the passage, exclaiming to one of his companions, "The old codger with the carpet-bag has just been here, but it wouldn't do." I now really began to be vexed, and indignant at this treatment. I pursued my course, however, to a fifth house. Here I was lucky enough to find a rousing fire in the parlour; and having, as I hoped for the last time, deposited my carpet-bag on a chair, I was about to ring the bell, when I was saved the trouble by the landlord, who, entering in a great pet, approached me without further ceremony, took up my carpet-bag, placed it in my hand again, and ordered me out of his house without delay. "I want a bed," said I. "Do you?" said he; "then you'll find one elsewhere, for

THE MAN WITH THE CARPET BAG.

asked me what I wanted? I replied, "A steak for my dinner, and a bed for the night." "I'm afraid we an't got no bed to spare, sir," said he, "but I'll go and ask missis"; and then, taking another look at me, and a second at my carpet-bag, out he flounced. I thought this uncivil, but had not long to wait before he returned; and with a sort of would-be knowing look, he informed me his missis hadn't a bed to spare, but I might have a steak if I liked. "I don't like!" said I; and taking up my bag, off I went in no pleasant mood. I was not long before I discovered another house, into which I popped, and was met by a pretty girl in the passage. "Pray, my dear," said I, "can I have a bed here to-night?" She eyed me from top to toe, and more particularly fixed her attention on my carpet-bag. "No, indeed, *my dear*," said she, laying stress on the latter words, "you cannot, so you may walk yourself and your carpet-bag off." Well, thought I, that's cool, at any rate, and I very soon took her advice. A third house was not far distant, and here again I made my entrance; but had not reached the door of the parlour, when a voice from the bar exclaimed, "Oh, here's the fellow with the carpet-bag! Thomas, Thomas, come and show him out!" and, sure enough, before I could ask a question, I was taken by the shoulders, and gently pushed into the street, with a polite intimation that they were "fly" to the carpet-bag, and so I might "mizzle." Well, thought I, this is London politeness with a vengeance! but a lodging I you shan't stuff your *carpet-bag* at my expense!" and out he pushed me, in defiance of all my expostulations. Never was poor devil so incensed: I was completely at a loss to discover the cause of this treatment. It had now become dark, and my anxiety for a lodging became still greater. I resolved upon one more experiment, however, before I gave myself up to despair, and seeing a sixth house of a very tempting description, in I marched, and approaching a good-looking woman in the bar, I made my best bow, and asked her if I could be accommodated with my dinner and a lodging for the night? "Certainly, sir," said she, with a smile; and, in a loud tone, called William, the waiter, and Betty, the chambermaid. Both came in a trice, and the landlady, pointing to me, said, "This gentleman wants a bed and his dinner, show him into No 2, Betty; and you, William, take the gentleman's order for dinner?" William and Betty hesitated, both scanning me and my carpet-bag more particularly, with as much surprise as if they had never seen two such objects before; and at the same moment putting their heads towards their mistress, I could just hear them whisper, "Carpet-bag!" In an instant the smile of the hostess turned to a frown, and, without further explanation, she exclaimed, looking over the bar at the same time at my unfortunate carpet-bag, "No, sir; we have no room; it won't do here"; and for the sixth time was I sent forth on my adventures. I now became thoroughly enraged, but suddenly

recollecting that, by law, victuallers are obliged to receive travellers, I resolved to be no longer trifled with, and, for the seventh and last time, entered a house in High Holborn, where, without ceremony, I walked into the coffee-room, threw my carpet-bag under the table, took off my great-coat, and desired the waiter to get me a beefsteak, oyster sauce, and potatoes. "Yes, sir," was the quick reply. The order was given to the cook in an audible voice—"Nice rumpsteak, hoister sauce, and tators, for one!" The cloth was laid, and in less time than I could have expected, I was discussing the merits of the viands laid before me. Good meat, thought I, requires good drink, and I ordered, in a breath, a pint of porter and a pint of sherry. "Yes, sir," said my attendant again, and with equal rapidity they were placed before me. The fellow, in turning round from me on this occasion, observed my carpet-bag under the opposite table. "Halloa!" said he, "whose is this here carpet-bag?" "'Tis mine," I replied. Had I confessed myself a kangaroo or a rhinoceros, I do not think I could have produced more astonishment than this admission, and I could observe him look round the room to the assembled guests, as if he expected them to join in his surprise. Still, I had no suspicion that there was anything in my bag, or in my appearance, to attract extraordinary attention; so, without further reflection, I finished my dinner, and called for a pint of port. On this being brought in, I put the old question, "Can I be accommodated with a bed?" "No, indeed, you cannot, Mr. Carpet-bag!" said he, shaking his impudent face close to mine. This was past all endurance, and, with an oath, I exclaimed, I would not stir out of the house that night. "Won't you, indeed!" said he; "we'll soon see that," and out he went. The persons in the room regarded me with side-long glances of doubt; but before I could make any remark upon what had occurred, in came Mr. Waiter with a policeman. "That's him," said he, pointing to me. "That's who?" roared I, with indignation; "what have you to say to me?" The policeman, who seemed a decent fellow of his sort, begged of me not to be violent; he believed, he said, I had a carpet-bag? "I have," replied I; "and what then?" "Only I should like to look into it, sir," said he. "Ill be —— if you shall," retorted I. "Ha! ha!" sniggered the waiter, "I thought how it would be." I now became perfectly outrageous, and demanded of the policeman if he took me for a felon? "No, sir," said he; "but the fact is, a man with a carpet-bag has been going round to the different taverns in town, plundering the landlords, and 'a caution' to this effect having appeared in the public papers, suspicion has arisen that you may be 'the man with the carpet-bag,' and I have been called in to ascertain the fact." The civility of the fellow, as well as the ludicrous, although vexatious, cause of all my wanderings, being thus explained, I could not but smile at my situation, and determined at once to justify my character. I gave him the key of the padlock, desiring him to open the bag, the contents of which I enumerated, concluding with the astounding declaration, that, last of all, he would find a canvas-bag, containing one hundred sovereigns, and letters to certain persons, whose names I mentioned. The man was a little abashed, but, at my desire, made the search—found all as I described, to the minutest particular—apologised for his interference—and took his departure. The waiter also humbly begged my pardon; the company laughed heartily at the recital of my mortifications; I got my bed, paid my bill, and the next morning proceeded to the house of a friend, where, had I gone in the first instance, I should have been saved the trouble of writing this letter for the express purpose of giving landlords "another caution"—and that is, not to look, in future, so suspiciously on a traveller with a carpet-bag, unless upon some more cogent ground than mere surmise.

I am, sir, yours,

A MANCHESTER WAREHOUSEMAN.

The same subject was also made the basis of a farce at one of the minor theatres.

The real "Man with the carpet-bag" was eventually secured, and his fate was similar to that of the convict MacNamara, whose offences have just been alluded to.

A VERY loquacious female witness, whom the opposing counsel could not silence, so far kept him at bay that, by the way of brow-beating her, he exclaimed, "Why, woman, there is brass enough in your face to make a kettle." "And sauce enough in yours," she instantly rejoined, "to fill it."

THE last execution of women for political offences took place in the year 1685. One of these, Mrs. Alicia Lisle, gave friendly shelter to two fugitive rebels after the battle of Sedgemoor. Judge Jeffreys, having caused her to be found guilty, sentenced her to be burnt alive. A petition procured for her the less terrible doom of death by the axe. The other victim, who was tried a few days later, was Elizabeth Gaunt, who had assisted one Burton, concerned in the Rye House Plot, to escape from justice. Afterwards, to screen himself, he basely betrayed his preserver, and appeared as principal witness at her trial. The hapless woman was burnt alive.

Poisons;

THE MYSTERIOUS DRUGS which silently deal death, now popularly described for the first time . .

NO work dealing with criminals and their achievements would be complete without some account of the agents which from time immemorial have been used to remove enemies. How poisons were first discovered is unknown, but it is probable that the very earliest toxic bodies made use of were those which to-day are considered as the latest product of modern science, namely, the toxalbumins.

There is a fascination about being able to slay your foe from a distance which has always acted strongly on man, and which really led to the development of the poisoner's art, a scientific advancement which has had much to do with the altering of the destinies of Europe, to say nothing of the East.

From earliest times there has been a halo of mystery surrounding the poisoner and his dreadful craft. Poets ascribed his noxious influence to a special blessing from some particular goddess, noticeable amongst whom was Hecate, the deity who was responsible for teaching the evil use of medicaments. It may here be remarked that whereas Hecate was supposed by the Romans and Greeks to instruct her devotees in the art of poisoning, and gave preference to the juices of the toad as a lethal medium, Heqet is the ancient Egyptian for a toad, which may be found in the Hieroglyphic writings throughout the museums of the world and in Egypt, and we may therefore fairly conclude that it was from the subjects of the Pharaohs that the knowledge of noxious drugs was derived.

Here let us say that we shall only describe poisons which can be certainly recognised by the medical men of to-day, avoiding those whose post-mortem detection is more difficult. This, our readers will agree, is but in the interests of justice, for the knowledge of poisons which are almost impossible to detect is at all times a dangerous weapon, and sometimes a serious temptation to the weak-minded. Secrecy led the infamous Borgias to poison: had there been the least fear of detection, Italy would not have been dominated by the Borgia family for nearly two centuries.

What is a poison? It cannot be said that a poison is a substance which when taken into the body causes death, for almost every known substance in certain quantities will bring about dissolution. Is it then a substance which when administered in small quantities acts fatally? If we adopt this definition we shall free the man who administers an ounce of nitre to a baby from the charge of murder. As a matter of fact, medical jurists have attempted to find a definition of a poison which shall be comprehensive and open to no objection, and they have failed. In spite of that, the generally accepted medical definition of a poison is as follows:

"A poison is a substance which when absorbed into the blood is capable of seriously affecting health or of destroying life," and to this definition is added a corrollary to the effect that certain substances, known as corrosive poisons, cause serious injury or death without necessarily entering the blood. This definition and addition, then, we will accept for the purposes of these articles.

We therefore state that most poisons must enter the blood before they become actively operative; it remains for us to see how substances can enter the system. Physiologists tell us that there are four ways in which a substance may gain access to the veins and arteries, namely, through the skin, through the lungs, by introduction into an open wound, and by absorption through the lining membranes of the stomach and bowels. Corrosive poisons operate chiefly by destruction of the living tissue, which the body is unable to replace from reserve material.

Some poisons act in whatever way they enter the blood. Thus arsenic will cause death if it enters the system through the skin, when applied externally for a length of time; if placed in a wound; if breathed when in the form of vapour, or if administered in medicine or food. Prussic acid operates through the lungs and stomach. The poison of the cobra kills rapidly if injected into a wound, but is perfectly innocuous when taken into the stomach. The poisoner has therefore to select the proper mode of administration before he sets about his diabolical work.

There are two conditions of the person to whom a poison

is administered which affect its action, namely, Habit and Idiosyncrasy. An individual accustomed to take arsenic or opium frequently, commencing with very small doses and gradually increasing the amount, acquires a certain amount of immunity from the drug, and a dose sufficient to kill several people would be required to injure him or her in the least. Thus the inhabitants of Styria make a daily practice of eating white arsenic, and they can consume at one dose sufficient of that drug to destroy several lives; while people who are victims to the opium habit can take large doses of this or laudanum with perfect impunity. The natives of the North of India are brought up from their childhood to use opium as a digestive and sedative, and it is no uncommon thing for an elderly man to eat five or six pills of the crude gum, each containing about a grain of the extract, in the course of a day.

Idiosyncrasy differs from Habit, in that it is congenital and not acquired. Certain persons have an idiosyncrasy against strychnine, and a tiny dose, which would be perfectly harmless to an ordinary person, may be followed by extraordinary effects. Sir Robert Christison mentions a case of an elderly man who had never been accustomed to take opium, swallowed an ounce of laudanum at once without the slightest effect. This is rare, for idiosyncrasy has usually the effect of making drugs more—instead of less—dangerous.

There is yet a third cause which influences the operation of poisons, but as it is pathologic, and so never appears in healthy persons, it is of no importance to the poisoner. That is Tolerance. Certain diseases confer immunity from the action of certain drugs for a time. Thus a person suffering from tetanus or hydrophobia can take enormous doses of opium without experiencing the slightest ill-effect.

The first poison with which we shall deal is one that has rarely been used by itself, but which has figured occasionally as an aid to the murderer, to help him in his administration of other noxious potions. This is

ACONITE.

This drug is obtained from the common garden plant known as monkshood, though in some parts of the country it is called wolfsbane, and in Ireland "Paddy" calls it blue rocket. That used in medicine is chiefly grown in Great Britain. It is also found in the mountainous districts of the temperate parts of the Northern Hemisphere. For the supply of Continental pharmacists a large quantity of the monkshood is exported from the Himalaya Mountains, in the north of India, where aconite grows at altitudes between 10,000 and 16,000 feet above the sea level. The plant is hardy, and is a striking object, with its dark leaves and its purple or blue, helmet-shaped flowers.

In India it is known as "bish," and the earliest mention of it is found in the writings of Alheroi, a Persian physician. Many Arabian doctors also mention the drug as being useful in cases of high fever, but Isa ben Ali speaks of it purely as a poison, and describes its effects with wonderful exactitude.

There is a good deal of superstition attached to the aconite plant in the East, and ceremonies have to be performed before the plant can be gathered with safety. Throughout the whole of the Hill districts of India the drug is in great repute, and every Pahariah, or hill-man, has a bundle of dried roots stowed away in some corner of his little thatched hut.

The root is gathered in October, when the plants have reached their full maturity. A permit is obtained from the Indian Forest Department by the leader of each gang of aconite gatherers, for which a fee of fifteen rupees, equal to about £1, is paid, and then, carrying blankets and cooking-pots, the band sets off for the higher levels where the precious plant grows.

As soon as a spot is found where there is plenty of aconite, the party proceed to work to build a series of little bamboo huts, about five feet high, which they roof in with leaves. Next morning, after the hâzari, or morning meal, the gatherers set out armed with spades and baskets, but before the work for the day is commenced a ceremony has to be performed, for the Bhootanies and Nepalese believe that the Great Spirit of the Hills imprisons evil spirits in the aconite plant, which fly out as soon as it is dug up and bestow misfortune on the digger. In order to counteract this, the leader of the band takes up his position above his followers, and burns a little dhuna, or native incense. Then he blows two or three shrill whistles. All stand and await a reply, which may be an echo or possibly the cry of the munnal, or hill pheasant. Whatever causes the sound, the Bhootanies take it as the dying shriek of the evil spirits, their minds are at rest, and all start digging.

The soil is shaken from the roots, which are then placed in baskets, and on the return to the camp are emptied on the ground and covered over with leaves to protect them from the frost, which at night is pretty severe in those high altitudes.

When a sufficient quantity has been collected, and partially dried on the ground, bamboo frames are erected about two and a-half feet high, beneath which a fire of wood is made. The flames are allowed to die down, and then the roots are laid on the frames over the glowing embers. The drying matter gives off terribly acrid fumes, which cause dizziness and a heaviness in the head, so the native who is deputed to look after this process does so with a thick cloth wrapped round his head, with two tiny holes for his eyes. The roots take three or four days cooking before they are properly dry, and then the whole party move back to their village and sell the crop they have collected.

In shape the root of the monkshood is a tap-root, not at all unlike horse-radish, for which vegetable it has several times been mistaken with fatal results. It can be detected at once, because when scraped it does not give off the pungent fumes that the horse-radish does. The root of the aconite is also more pointed, and has more plentiful and coarser rootlets growing out of it. It is, moreover, of a darker colour.

The active principle of aconite is an alkaloid called aconitine, which varies greatly in the roots, according to the conditions under which the plant is grown. In medicine it is usually administered in the form of tincture of aconite or Fleming's tincture, which, by the way, is very much stronger than the ordinary solution.

The symptoms of poisoning by this drug are as follows: In from a few minutes to an hour from the time the poison has been taken, the patient experiences a tingling sensation in the mouth and throat, which are much parched. If a large quantity has been administered, this tingling becomes a very severe burning. This tingling rapidly extends to the hands and feet, and soon the whole surface of the body is affected. The skin of the extremities are cool and clammy to the touch, but at the same time the patient complains that he feels as if the limbs had been flayed. There is a loss of power in the legs, and sometimes sight and hearing are much dulled, though usually the victim remains in full possession of his faculties till death ensues. Occasionally convulsions take place. The pulse becomes weak and variable; the pupils of the eyes dilated, and the slightest exertion may bring on a fatal syncope. Death, however, usually results from failure of the respiratory organs. Aconite may be said to paralyse all the organs in turn, and so destroy life.

The antidotes to aconite are best administered by a medical man, but till his arrival alcohol may be given, and very strong tea without milk or sugar. Should there be tannin in the house, or better still, tannic acid, a quarter of a teaspoonful of either of those drugs may save the patient's life if administered at once. Sal volatile, or spirits of ammonia, in a little water are useful in cases of aconite poisoning, but too much hope must not be raised, for the drug is a very deadly one, and few cases recover if the dose has been a large one. Medical men administer tincture of digitalis in twenty-drop doses, or give inhalations of nitrite of amyl. The patient should be kept in a recumbent position, and if there is any difficulty about breathing, artificial respiration, as in the case of drowning, should be resorted to. The first thing of importance is, however, to get a medical man. If the drug is swallowed by mistake, and the accident discovered in time, an emetic may be of great service, but if not immediately resorted to, the action of the aconite will probably prevent the emetic working.

From the root the alkaloid aconitine is prepared. Till quite lately it was the most virulent poison known; one-fiftieth of a grain having proved fatal, while it is certain that one-tenth of a grain would always produce death. It is a white powder without any definite crystalline structure; scarcely soluble in water, but is dissolved by alcohol or weak acids. One one-thousandeth of a grain can be distinguished by the tingling sensation set up by aconite.

This poison has rarely been used in modern times for criminal purposes. Only one case has occurred in England where the drug was the sole poison used, namely, in the case of Dr. Lamson, who killed his brother-in-law, Percy John, at Wimbledon, in 1881, and suffered the extreme penalty of the law for his crime. He used the alkaloid aconitine, administered in capsules, and mixed with sugar.

In 1865 the diabolic Dr. Pritchard used Fleming's tincture of aconite, together with antimony tartrate, to kill his wife and mother-in-law, but in that case death was directly due to the antimony, and it has been suggested that the aconite was used to prevent the vomiting which would naturally

follow the administration of the large dose of antimony which he gave to his mother-in-law.

Suicides fight shy of aconite for some reason or other, possibly on account of its comparative slowness of action, for death seldom ensues in less than three-quarters of an hour, and the patient rarely loses consciousness; still, in 1863, a man named Hunt poisoned his wife and children with prussic acid, and then took an ounce of tincture of aconite. He managed to write a few lines after he had taken the poison, admitting the crime which he had committed, and retained his consciousness till his death. A curious symptom in his case was the total loss of all sensation in his limbs, which came on about a quarter of an hour before he died. Pinching and pricking were not felt by him, and even a deep dig with a lancet was not noticed by the victim. And, but for the parched condition of his throat, he could have talked up to the moment of his decease.

But though the poison is not often used intentionally to take life, there have been many cases of accidental death through its use. One Excise officer, in 1853, died through accidentally tasting tincture of aconite, which he believed was a flavoured spirit, coloured to avoid duty. He was able to walk from the Customs House to London Bridge after taking the poison, and death did not take place for four hours. In the same year a woman took seventy drops of Fleming's tincture in mistake for a cough mixture, and died.

It may be pointed out that though there are few good antidotes for this deadly drug, there are most excellent tests for its detection in the body, so that a murderer who selected aconite, or aconitine, to work his wicked purpose with, would probably slay his victim, but would shortly follow him or her to the tomb. Dr. Lamson counted on the difficulty of detecting aconitine, but found that he had not kept up his medical knowledge, and paid for his crime with his life.

Criminal Problems

IS OUR PRESENT PRISON SYSTEM REALLY EFFECTIVE?

IF it could be shown that our present methods of dealing with criminals was likely in the future to produce beneficial results, or if the experience of the past told us that success was being attained, so that we might with reason hope that in the distant future evil-doing would practically vanish from the face of the land, we would have no right to question the action of those in whose hands the reformation of our criminal classes has been left. But the patient observation of criminal statistics reveals the fact that little actual progress is being made, and that our present system shows small signs of ever being effectual.

The framers of the present penal code had but one idea in their minds—namely, to deter the malefactor from pursuing his nefarious calling. Incidentally it was hoped that the example made of one might be of use in deterring others from leaving the strict paths of rectitude. In other words, only two natural instincts, and those the least meritorious, were appealed to—Terror and Self-Interest.

The means by which these two feelings were to be operated on was solely a reversal of the criminal's habitual mode of life. By nature he is idle, fond of luxury, and frequently given to drink. Therefore, argued our law-givers, he must be made to work, must live in hardship, and be compelled to abstain from drink and tobacco. The malefactor normally loves companionship, and accordingly he was to be deprived of all society, and forced to brood in solitude on the unpleasant condition to which his evil courses had led him. From this line of argument sprung the punishments of hard labour and penal servitude, and our penal system became one of unadulterated coercion—brutalising rather than elevating.

But if the method attains the end for which it was designed, we must uphold it. Does it do so? Figures speak for themselves. The first condition of a sound judicial system is to render punishment almost certain to follow the commission of an offence. From the "Judicial Statistics," published by authority, we find that the average proportion of arrests to the crimes committed is only 42 per cent., while the average relation which the number of committals for trial bears to the total of arrests is 74 per cent., making, as a moment's calculation will demonstrate, a paltry proportion of 32.5 persons out of every hundred who commit indictable offences brought to trial. But conviction is not the inevitable result of trial, for one-quarter of those who stand in the dock are discharged as innocent, so that only about one-fourth of those who commit serious crimes, such as murder, burglary, larceny, and robbery with violence, meet their just deserts, giving the offender a chance of three to one that he will escape detection. Truly a most satisfactory state of affairs!

Granted, however, that our rulers have, by their agents, captured the criminal, are the conditions under which he has to live such as to make him prefer honest toil to a return to his former mode of life? That is a question of degree. To the man of refinement there is no doubt that the present system is horribly irksome, the food being unpalatable, the labour such as he is not used to, and the confinement almost unbearable. Time, however, is a great ameliorator, and where a man of culture leaves prison after undergoing a term of, say, six weeks' imprisonment fully determined that never again will he enter the gaol portal as an unwilling guest, the erstwhile gentleman departing from Dartmoor or Portland after a sojourn of ten years has become so accustomed to the conditions under which he has spent so many summers, that prison has really few terrors for him.

The case of the prisoner from agricultural districts is different. Take the daily life of a farm labourer. From early morning till dark he works hard in the fields, exposed to every variation of the fickle English climate. His food is of the coarsest, and in quantity scarcely sufficient to support life, while at night he sleeps on a bed far worse than those supplied to any lady's pet poodle. In a convict establishment he works a shorter time at easier tasks than he has previously been compelled to do as an honest man; his food is of better quality than he has previously been able to afford, and is supplied in ample quantity; his cell is well warmed and lighted, while after his half-day's toil he sleeps on a bed far better than he had ever imagined in his pre-criminal days. What deterrent effect has such a punishment on that class of man? Absolutely none.

Are the punitive measures taken against habitual criminals effective? you ask. If they were, would there be any habitual criminals? is the suggestive Socratic reply. We can go farther than this and boldly state that many a burglary, many a fraud, has been actually planned in prison by the men who subsequently stood in the dock for their misdeeds. Experience has taught criminologists that if the first sentence is not deterrent, no subsequent one will be, and little thought is necessary to tell us that this must be the result of the system pursued.

JONATHAN WILD'S HOUSE.

In the early part of last century public curiosity was attracted by two strange old houses at the northern end of New Farringdon Street, which were evidently constructed for the purpose of harbouring and concealing thieves and robbers who infested the metropolis. The houses were inhabited by persons of dishonest and abandoned habits, but by the active measures of Mr. Wakelyn, and the other Commissioners appointed to carry out the intended improvements in this neighbourhood, possession was obtained of the property, on compensating the freeholders. The following is a contemporary account:

"On the inspection of the houses, singular discoveries were made; and the accounts of them which have got abroad are drawing crowds to visit them. Lord Lonsdale inspected the house; and on the preceding day they were visited by the Duke of Cambridge and a distinguished party. The utmost surprise is expressed that such a place could have existed so long in the heart of the metropolis.

"The houses (one of which is said to have been the dwelling of the famous Jonathan Wild) communicate with each other, and are at the west side of the Fleet Ditch. One of them was kept as a chandler's shop, by way of lulling suspicion, and immediately behind the counter were trap-doors, one of which was used as a means of escape, and the other opened into secret drawers, or depository for stolen articles. Passing down the larger trap, the pursued could elude the vigilance of the police by getting through a window and crossing the Fleet Ditch over a plank, which was kept at hand, and afterwards drawn into the opposite house. The pursued might then pass into Black Boy Alley, and thereby get into Cow-cross, and the numerous courts and alleys in that neighbourhood. Immediately under the basement there is a capacious dark cellar, evidently constructed for the purposes of concealment; and here it is where a skull and some human bones were found and given over to the police. The top of a butcher's steel has also been discovered, which has studded in silver letters the following upon it: 'Benjamin Turtell, July 19, 1787.'" At the western extremity of the cellars is a parting wall, which, on being searched, left no doubt that there is another secret chamber beyond this portion of the premises, but, owing to some legal difficulties,

this part of the houses has not hitherto been explored. Upon the first floor of the buildings are several hiding-places, ingeniously contrived. In one room a sharp angle is formed at the corner, sufficiently large to conceal a person, which is effectually done by replacing the screen corresponding with the other part of the wall. Numerous traps are made in the various floorings, and leave a direct communication with the cellar on the back of the Fleet Ditch, and a spout running the entire length of the house is so constructed that stolen property could be removed with the greatest despatch, and the offenders escape over the roofs of the houses, which are connected by means of a draw-bridge. Upon a more minute examination of the interior of the house, No. 3, West Street, formerly the old Red Lion Tavern, which recommenced on Thursday afternoon, there was discovered in a small room, beyond the one which adjoins the shop, and which up to Thursday afternoon was not found out, a small sliding panel, about two feet square, ingeniously let into the wall at the extreme end of the room. Two or three of the labourers having proffered their services to enter and explore this mysterious opening, torches were lighted, and they proceeded through. After passing along a narrow, damp passage, extending in length about five yards from the entrance, they found themselves in a small brick cell, about six feet by three wide, lighted only by a small iron grating, which admitted light enough only to add more to the misery of its unhappy occupant. About a foot lower down than this they discovered a small iron door, of immense substance, bolted and barred on the inside, which, for above an hour, resisted all efforts to open it. Having at length yielded, it was found to look out upon the old Fleet River, now called Fleet Ditch. This door is so contrived, that a person making his escape through this aperture, if discovered by those in pursuit of him, might return, bolt the door, and defy the most experienced officer in existence. Doubtless, many more such will be discovered, as an active search is still being carried on by workmen employed by Mr. Wakelyn, whose conduct upon the occasion is most praiseworthy."

LEAVES FROM . . OUR NOTEBOOK

A SCOTCHMAN, giving evidence at the Bar of the House of Lords in the affair of Captain Porteous, and telling of the variety of shots which were fired on the unhappy occasion, was asked by the Duke of Newcastle what kind of shots they were. "Why," said the man, in his broad dialect, "such as they shoot fools (fowls) with, and the like." "What kind of fools?" asked the Duke, smiling at the word. "Why, my lord, dukes (ducks), and sic kind o' fools."

ORIGINALLY the punishment for treason was simply death by the axe. It was not till the reign of Edward III. that hanging, drawing, and quartering was made a legal punishment, that pleasing mode of quitting this world having been invented for the express delectation of a Mr. Maurice, the son of a nobleman, who was convicted, not of treason, but of piracy. He met his end A.D. 1241. In the reign of Elizabeth the recusant priests were hanged, drawn, and quartered, and the gentle Protestant virgin queen occasionally gave orders that the victims should be quite conscious when the disembowelling process commenced. This was often done without express orders; indeed, we read of one poor Jesuit who was hanged but for a second or two, and who continued to pray while the executioner ripped up his abdomen and groped about with his hand to try and find his victim's heart! How those Christians loved one another!

THE Duke of Orleans, who was Regent of France during the minority of King Louis XV., was most debauched in his life and abandoned in his morals. And yet he appeared to be a prince of great humanity, and a lover of public justice. When Count Horn was sentenced to be broken on the wheel, Duke d'Aremberg, and the whole family of Horn, applied to the Regent for a pardon. But not succeeding in this attempt, and finding the Prince inflexible, they requested that the count's sentence might only be changed, and to avoid an ignominious death, which would be a lasting stain on the whole family, that he might have the favour to be beheaded. This likewise the Regent refused, and made the following answer: "Count Horn is my relation as well as yours, but the infamy is not in the punishment, but in the crime." When a prince solicited the Regent to pardon a murder which he had committed, after having been pardoned for the same crime once or twice before, the Regent said: "I will pardon you, but take notice and keep this in your memory—I will certainly pardon the man, whoever he be, that kills you." This admonition had a proper effect, and put a stop to the barbarities of this Bourbon prince, who presumed that his quality of prince of the blood was a licence for murder. These two answers of the Regent deserve to be written in letters of gold.

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